Making their marks: Teachers' understandings of art assessment at year 11

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Abstract

This thesis investigates understandings that secondary school art teachers hold about assessment of year 11 students' artwork. My experience as an art educator has lead to my interest in this area. Boughton (1997) also argues that there is a need for more systematic investigation to underpin the practices of assessment in art.

An analysis of the fields of art education and assessment provided the context for the study and also informed the research process and research question. The field of art and art education is historically and theoretically contested and this influences curricula design and examination prescriptions creating a complex field for teachers to be involved in.

A qualitative approach was chosen using unstructured interviews, participant observations in classroom settings and document analysis. Three female and three male teachers participated. The schools were similar sizes and included state, private, co- educational, single sex and semi rural. All teachers were trained and three were practising artists.

Kvale cited in Hill (2001) explains how unstructured interviews allow openness to changes in sequences and forms of questions in order to follow up the answers given and stories told by participants. This was important in this study as the conversations of teachers refocused discussions during follow-up visits. Assessment events were videoed and replayed to participants to stimulate discussion. A qualitative approach was seen as appropriate for this project as the field of art education that teachers work in is continually being redefined and reconstructed.

The writing process continually evolved as I read the literature. Burr (1995:4) provided insights into social constructionist methods describing how "our current accepted ways of understanding the world is a product not of objective observation of the world, but of the social processes and interactions in which

people are constantly engaged with each other." As my writing evolved, the research question was redefined. Originally the research focus had been to find out how teachers went about assessing art. This was refocused into how they position themselves and are affected by the competing discourses in art education. It seemed that the data analysis and writing processes informed each other.

The findings revealed three interconnecting layers, which provided insights into teachers' assessment practices. These layers included new assessment discourses such as standards based and formative assessment methods, summative assessment and national examination discourses, and traditional views about intelligence. The teachers' assessment methods were dominated by summative pressures, which resulted in professional concerns for teachers. These included: knowing what was acceptable practice; needing to have agreement; maintaining standards; and establishing subject status for art education. The influence of traditional ideas about academic intelligence also seemed important to these teachers and contributed to maintaining the status of art education. These teachers used ideas about academic intelligence to categorize students' abilities and to inform assessment judgements.

The thesis concludes by asking why art teachers have continued to value summative assessments, which have resulted in a narrow formalist approach in classroom practice and continual controversy about assessment judgements. It seems that the status of art education is validated through examination results. It appeared from this study that positioning art within an academic examination structure has compromised the curriculum basis for art education.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This study is about secondary school art teachers assessing year eleven student artwork. The research journey involved several changes of focus because of the complexity of theory surrounding the field of art education. As I progressed, I found the process similar to my own practice as a printmaker. The printmaking process became a metaphor to explain how I was trying to bring competing ideas together to create, order and complete a picture. The competing discourses within art, art education and assessment fields form complex inter-relationships. The research focus became more concerned with these discourses and how they affect teachers in their actions and conversations. This includes how they interpret curriculum and assessment requirements, the resulting influences on their classroom practice, and how they manage the assessment process. The rationale for the study, and the issues surrounding art education and assessment are described in the following sections.

Why the study (rationale)

My curiosity about assessment in art education arises from experiences as a practising art teacher for over 20 years. My role as an external assessor and developer of standards based assessment in New Zealand, such as unit standards and achievement standards, has also lead to my research interest in this area.

Throughout this time I have been aware of considerable debate about art education and assessment. This debate is wider than assessment. It relates to teachers being unclear about interpreting prescription aims, designing content, knowing what is acceptable and what is best practice. Assessment concerns have been expressed by classroom teachers and documented through Art Teacher Association minutes, letters to the PPTA (Post Primary Teachers Association), Ministry of Education, New Zealand Qualifications Authority, Principals' Associations and the media. These concerns have never been formally collated and exist as scattered letters, replies and journal articles. At times, some of the issues have been taken up by local Principals' Associations and through the teachers union the PPTA. As recently as 2001, The National Conference of

the Secondary Principals' Association of New Zealand (Stirling, 2001) passed a motion of no confidence in the present procedures for assessing Bursary Art.

Provocation for my investigation also came from Boughton (1996) who highlights a continuing lack of research in art assessment (initially revealed in his doctoral research). He raises questions about the discourses operating in art assessment, the basis for these, and how teachers interpret students' levels of accomplishment. As I searched the literature, like Boughton, I became aware of the lack of writing and research about art assessment in New Zealand. This was surprising, given my perception that issues of assessment are of considerable importance to New Zealand teachers and when taking into account that drawing and art making have been included as examination subjects since the early twentieth century.

Boughton's point is seen in Duncum and Bracey (2001) who claim that their new book "offers novice teachers the best possible introduction to the central art issues of today." Assessment, however, is not a central issue for these contributors. Arguments presented by American, Australian and New Zealand writers are about debating positions on art education theory, and it is only Freedman (2001:126) who acknowledges "that amongst the issues of art teaching today are those of accountability and assessment standards." As Freedman states, there has been a shift in assessment methods to standards based approaches. Over the last ten years, the New Zealand education system has been in transition with unit standards being available since 1996 and achievement standards introduced at year 11 in 2002.

So, why has art assessment been explored insufficiently as a subject through writing and research? Boughton (1996) argues that while grand visions of the field are attractive, evaluation issues are not. Furthermore, the continuing debates about what art is, and what art education should be, creates problems determining positions about art assessment. New Zealand, also, has not had a strong background in assessing art. During the post war years the emphasis in art education was on the child's individual growth, perception, creativity and development rather than measuring and testing. Boughton (1996) further suggests that assessment is less popular as a subject because

evaluators ask hard accountability questions and become associated with accountants and auditors, particularly as accountability requirements have influenced educational practice over the years.

When I further investigated the New Zealand literature, there were only brief references to assessment. A small and general reference to evaluation was included when the Department of Education's account of art education in New Zealand in the late 1970's for the 23rd INSEA (International Society for Education through Art) conference. The Department (1977: 55) recommended that:

> Any evaluation must be at the level of the pupils' aesthetic growth. While it is not the teacher's function to impose their own arbitrary standards, they nonetheless have a responsibility to be aware of the particular achievements of each child, the growth, thought and sensitivity these indicate, and possible directions in which to encourage development.

This statement reflects the progressive child-centered approach to art education that developed in New Zealand after the late 1940s. It also helps to explain the lack of emphasis on assessment, as a progressive approach encourages imaginative individuality rather than assessment. The National Art Education Syllabus (1989:16) also states that:

> Evaluation must be based on the objectives the teacher has in mind, with reference to the syllabus and also be based on the outcomes of units of work, which were not necessarily anticipated...and often indicate a student's inventive and imaginative behaviour.

Official assessment guidelines are often general in their intentions and offer little specific help to art teachers. Ministry guidelines set out in *Assessment: Policy to Practice* (1994) contain only general recommendations about best assessment practice and no specific references to help teachers with art assessment. *The National Syllabus Guidelines* (1991:38) directs art teachers to be aware of their students' backgrounds, interests and

abilities as the most powerful constraints on their programme design. To assess units of work, questions are posed about how to record progress relating to students' knowledge, skills and attitude as well as a student's sense of personal achievement. In an example provided of year 10 work, the recommendation is to monitor rather than assess, using observation and discussion during the development of the unit. Direction by the teacher is to be given only when necessary.

Such references highlight the complexity that face art educators when developing programmes and carrying out valid assessment. The breadth and range of skills and attitudes that are covered in any art programme, unlike other subjects are not content specific and subsequent assessments can also vary in focus and purpose. In recent years, the main source of assessment discussion about senior examinations has appeared in the annual examiner's reports, which have been published since the late 1980s. These reports attempt to establish a consistency between the examination prescriptions, the methods of achieving the learning aims embodied in them and the method of assessing the outcome.

This complex context provides the background and rationale for this study. The breadth of opinion surrounding art education usually results in prescriptions that are broadly based and open to interpretation by teachers. While guidelines help teachers interpret prescriptions it is not until some summative assessment event is reached that teachers receive indications about how successfully they have understood the requirements. In other words, it is often the assessment process that provides teachers with guidance as to what is expected.

Framing the research question

In a similar way to printmaking practice, in constructing an image, the research focus was posed, framed, and reformed as the analysis of data took place. The research area initially related to how teachers understood and were going about assessing their students' artwork. A qualitative method was chosen to explore this initial idea of teacher understandings.

Interviews and observations were made with teachers in their own settings. Three female and three male teachers participated. The schools were similar sizes and included state, private, co-educational, single sex and semi rural. All teachers were trained and three were practicing artists. Other teachers provided data at meetings and conferences. Videos were also made of teachers assessing work and these were used to stimulate conversations (stimulated recall) in a follow up visit. I found that using a metaphor relating to printmaking practice for my writing, helped to provide a framework in which to layer and construct meaning, and to clarify and make sense of the complexity of material that I was dealing with.

I also began to reflect on my own practice as a printmaker and teacher and this influenced the development of the study, reframing the question and providing new insights. The research focus moved from a purely descriptive approach about how teachers were assessing art into a deeper analysis of their discourse. This meant searching the conversations for meanings and developing propositions about teachers' assessment practices in art and positioning these within the literature. This development of meaning and propositions used social constructionist devices and autobiography (Richardson, Van Maanen cited in Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). This meant including my own voice as a practicing art teacher with examination experience from the position of a participant.

Emergent aim of the study

The wider contexts surrounding art assessment emerged over time as critical and complex factors influencing the study and the findings. These include the historical background of art education, competing art theories, curriculum positions and assessment practices. The resulting confusions and tensions can result in power struggles amongst groups with particular vested interests and result in professional vulnerability for art teachers because of the lack of certainty in the field. The assessment field is also very complex and it became clear that the study needed to go beyond descriptive accounts of teachers' practices. The findings suggest that teachers' assessment judgments are influenced by many factors and located in complex environments. Teachers are influenced by their own contexts and backgrounds, which

lead them to hold particular values and assumptions about art, education and assessment.

The emerging propositions related to: teachers positioning themselves and the subject professionally; the conflict experienced between formative and summative assessments; and teachers' positions within wider assessment and educational environment. This last theme includes discussion about teachers' assumptions and beliefs relating to educational and behavioural norms.

The changing assessment environment provided another layer to the assessment picture as teachers move from a norm-referenced to a standards-based environment. Are teachers concerned with, and being influenced by, these changes? Are they, using new terminology, becoming aware of official requirements, and managing the transition to a new assessment environment, which challenges old ideas with new definitions including validity, formative, ipsative, and transparency? Is this impacting on teachers' practice in the classroom? This resulted in the scope of the research study becoming wider and located in the broader environment of what it means to assess.

It seems there are many questions raised about assessment and this study only addresses some of these. These questions are discussed against views expressed in the literature and are outlined in the conceptual framework chapter that follows. The methodology used to initiate and develop the study is described in depth in Chapter three. There are three findings chapters in this thesis. The first, Chapter four, discusses how new educational and assessment discourses affect art teachers' classroom interactions with students. Chapter five presents findings about the professional tensions facing art teachers within summative assessment contexts. Chapter six presents an analysis of teachers talking about intelligence, ability and behaviours that are located in normative discourses. Chapter seven concludes by establishing relationships between the key findings and signals aspects of art assessment that have implications not only for art teachers but also for other curriculum subjects.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework

This chapter builds on the ideas introduced in Chapter one and maps out the complicated layers of debate about art, art education theory and assessment in New Zealand. It explains the development of art education curriculum in New Zealand and issues surrounding the examination systems. Debates in art education include: what is meant by art education; how is art learned in the New Zealand context; should learning in art be assessed; and can art be assessed reliably? Bigger questions include: the many contested definitions of art; the legitimacy of art in education; approaches to assessment; and the influence of teacher's own values and learned practices about art. The issues surrounding art are outlined with a focus on year 11 art, the prescriptions, assessment changes, methods and debates. The chapter concludes with the research focus and key questions restated.

The term "art" is a contested concept. At the time of writing this chapter, an example of public debate appeared in the Christchurch Press, (Cook:2002) - could the Nelson Wearable Arts Show be defined as art? A gallery director and some members of the public described the awards as only entertainment, that the works were not art because they lack theory and seriousness. The debate in the broader public arena is echoed within education. In such a widely contested field, the possibilities of developing art education curricula that have common agreement seem difficult. Pearson (2001:67) argues, "understanding the conditions that apply to constructing art education is an important part of understanding how and why certain forms of knowledge are normalized at any time in any social context." In other words, particular art curricula and subsequent assessments are dependent on social values that change over time. This means that teaching and assessing in this field is difficult.

Background to the study

Theoretical context

Following the metaphor provided by my printmaking practice, which includes different techniques, and ways of layering plates to create images, the picture surrounding art education and assessment is also layered. There are traditional and

contemporary viewpoints, different ways of teaching, different philosophies and positions about the content of programmes and debates about the validity of assessing in art education. The field of art, which is historically, politically, educationally contested, also encircles these layers. These layers, like printmaking blocks, can be organised in many ways and included or excluded in different contexts when trying to build and form a particular picture or argument.

This creates a complex environment for art educators within a field that eludes clear definition and which is continually contested. As Hickman cited in Duncum and Bracey (2001:8) puts it:

> Art remains a contested concept, all the more so when we examine the shaky foundations on which it is built...That which educators call art in art education can be seen as a dynamic yet formless phenomenon; it has no really sound epistemological base and is therefore difficult to pin down.

There are many key theories claiming to know what art is. A brief synopsis of some of these key theories is provided here in order to describe some of the breadth and range of these and to establish key points of difference, which have impacted on art education over the years. The first group of theories focuses on art works and their appreciation as the important feature of defining what art is. Kant in his *Critique of Judgement* (1790) established the idea that aesthetic judgements were based on feelings of pleasure rather than those of cognition or logic. Dewey (1934) argued for a more pragmatic approach to aesthetics. He believed art was for all and needed to be experienced by an audience with aesthetic responses being different for different people. Dissanayke (1984) recognized common and cross-cultural links through art such as art being therapeutic, providing order, meaning and cultural significance. Psychologically based theories (Jung, Freud, cited in Department of Education, 1978) contest that the practical expression of art stems from the release of deep-seated, innermost feelings from the subconscious and can be used in a therapeutic way to release such emotions. Modernist theories include approaches based on formal elements and principles particularly within an abstract context.

The second group of theories, contests the popular assumption that art exists in artworks. Dickie (1974) proposes an institutional theory, which argues that art is to be found in the social processes by which artworks gain their status. Anthropological theories promote a wider study of cultures to know what art is. Chalmers (2001:86) argues that we get closest to knowing art when we include perspectives of groups and individuals across different time periods and cultures who make, sell, collect, study, and worship art. Chalmers (1990) also argues for a pluralistic approach that recognizes other artifacts of art not just those traditionally recognized as "western high" art. Other contemporary theories include feminism, and socially critical approaches. New discourses of economics and market forces often referred to as new right ideology provide another layer surrounding these theories.

These key theories indicate the dynamic and contested nature of art and have influenced the development of art education curricula. This is discussed in the following section.

Why is art in the curriculum and what form does it take?

As people have engaged in art practice leaving their marks on cave walls, manuscripts, objects, and ornaments, art has also existed as a traditional subject in educational curricula since Plato included aesthetic ideas in his Athenaeum curriculum in the 4th century B.C. Since then key curriculum theorists have further established the place of art in education. This is seen with Hirst's inclusion of Literature and Fine arts in his curriculum design, and Phenix's inclusion of art as aesthetics (McGee, 1997:112,3). The embedding of art as a curriculum subject in recent centuries has also been attributed to Kant's three critiques of judgement in which he divides reason into: theoretical knowing, practical reason and aesthetic judgement. Mansfield (1998) argues that Kant's work provides the foundations for modernist assumptions of a universalism for artistic expression, aesthetic response, formalism in art education and an aesthetic distance essential to Kantian aesthetics. Freedman (2001:5) argues "these ideas have established making aesthetic objects and having aesthetic experiences as the foundation of art education."

The later influence of modernist ideas on art education derives from scientific rationalism. Freedman (2001:36) describes the development of formalist discourse as a "pseudo-scientific conception of aesthetics that developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, at a time when science was gaining currency." This aimed to address aesthetic problems about the use of abstract qualities in modern art. Formalism focuses on the analysis of the physical and perceptual characteristics of art objects and involves the reduction of form to elements such as line, shape and colour, and principles such as balance, rhythm and unity.

Challenges in the last twenty years to modernist philosophy include arguments that art is more than practice and is socially constructed. Freedman (2001:43) describes how "recent curriculum theorists have struggled with ways to re-conceptualise curriculum from a post modern perspective." She is suggesting that curricula need to understand meaning differently. This could include studying different artistic communities and the conceptual spaces between works of art, rather than just techniques and the formal qualities of art objects. Chalmers (2001) agrees, saying art education should focus on the socio-cultural functions of art. Other new theories reflect socially critical approaches seen in postmodern theory such as Duncum and Freedman (2001) who argue for art education to be based around the visual culture that bombards us through the media and to explore what lies behind this imagery. Bracey (2001) supports an art education based around the study of the social institutions of art rather than being focused on the artworks themselves while Duncum (1991) argues that art education must adopt a position to explore issues of aesthetics, power and dominant discourses as well as social and ethical issues.

The ways these evolving curriculum theories have influenced recent curriculum development in New Zealand are discussed in the following section.

The New Zealand art curriculum context

The New Zealand syllabi, prescriptions and course statements historically reflect such diverse thinking about art. Pearson (2001:69) claims that art education prescriptions

are not simple statements about the ontology of art but argue the case for the existence of art education.

> The prescriptions literally prescribe an existence for art, and in doing so they also describe what counts as knowledge to do with art. All prescriptions for art education stand as art theories whether or not any allegiance to an art theory is acknowledged.

Recent curriculum reform reflects theories relating to anthropological, institutional and socially critical approaches to art education. The J1 to Form 7 Art Education Syllabus (Department of Education, 1989) includes a theoretical aim requiring students:

> ...to develop an understanding of the actions and relationships of art in cultures and in society (Department of Education, 1989:4).

This trend continued in The Arts in The New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2000). A statement defines the visual arts as:

> Combinations of these forms are some of the visual arts that reflect the traditions and modern day expressions of cultures and societies. Their forms and processes enable us to tell stories about ourselves, to express our personal and collective identities, and to participate in the local and global community.

The introduction of this document also includes references to all students having the opportunities to learn about traditional and contemporary Maori art forms, as well as reflecting the innovations of contemporary times, new art forms and technologies.

Although many contemporary theories have influenced recent curriculum development in New Zealand, the examination prescriptions have emphasized practice located in two main philosophies or positions. One is described as child

centered, involves individual expression and is often referred to as *Progressivism*. The second is based on formalist aspects of *Modernism*.

Progressivism

In New Zealand, Tovey, the National Supervisor of Art and Craft, promoted Progressivism through a discovery based art education from the 1950s to the 1970s. He believed that art teaching, including copying, geometrical drawing and perspective in the decades before the Second World War, were inappropriate and harmful (Henderson, 1998). Tovey was influenced by the theories of Jung, Freud, Read, Czizek and Lowenfeld (Department of Education, 1978). Lowenfeld cited in Department of Education, (1978) believed all children were endowed naturally with a capacity for creativity, personal growth, and the development of self-esteem through the appreciation of art. These developments also linked to American Progressivism, which influenced New Zealand's development through Dewey's (1934) work. His vision for art to be a liberating influence in curriculum is reflected by Eisner (1996:2) in the following:

> The arts were believed to have the power to give to each child access to a preverbal imaginative life uncontaminated by prescriptions of correctness.

This emphasis on the child's individual growth, perception, creativity and development through art was not compatible with educational practices aimed at imparting information to children and then testing them to measure the amount they retained.

Tovey also promoted Maori art through the Northern Maori Project of the 1950s which taught art, craft, dance and music as an integrated whole. This was expanded in the 1960s with the teaching of Maori arts and crafts in schools and aimed at "sustaining interest in traditional culture and allowing children of two races to understand one another better" (Dept of Education, 1978:36).

The ideas of progressivism influenced the School Certificate art prescription (1976) with the inclusion of the concept of "creative imagination" which linked it to earlier psychologically based theories. This prescription also reflected cultural and anthropological theories by the inclusion of a compulsory study of Maori art.

Modernism

Modernist theories replaced earlier traditional technical approaches dating from the late 1800s and the Progressive art education philosophy of the mid 1900s. The introduction of 6th form Certificate, Fine Arts Preliminary and School Certificate examinations in the 1960s and 70s emphasized traditional skills based around formal elements and principles within a modernist approach. These approaches, included learning from artist models, structured programmes and content based around the acquisition of formal skills. Teacher instruction and intervention were also seen as important particularly in the 6th Form Certificate and Fine Arts Preliminary examinations. The year 13 Bursary art examination (Universities Entrance Board, 1989) developed from the Preliminary examination with students required to present a six panel portfolio covering two areas selected from Painting, Printmaking, Design, Sculpture and Photography practice. This Examination was revised in 1989 to cover five separate examinations in each of the disciplines. All of these examinations emphasized formal, practical skills.

Modernist developments were also influenced by *Discipline-based art education* (DBAE), an American movement, which was based around four areas: art making; art history; art criticism; and art aesthetics. Using the DBAE approach children were encouraged to develop increasingly sophisticated abilities to examine historical contexts, produce, describe and interpret artworks. Philosophically, the ideas behind DBAE have been an evolving feature of pedagogical practice in art since the 1970s.

Summary

Art education in New Zealand has remained located in practice rather than theory. Curriculum programmes since the late 1880s have included drawing practice, and more recently emphasised practice in a range of specialist art fields. All senior

examinations since the 1960s have been practically based and examined through the presentation of portfolios of practical work.

The different discourses of progressivism and formalism in art education raise questions about assessment and whether the student products of art courses can be reliably assessed. Modernist approaches have aspects that lend themselves to assessment, while Progressive, personally expressive approaches are harder to assess. These different approaches and theories seem to layer behind current teaching approaches as previous mindsets, which reappear and disappear in new guises as theories are reformed. This layering of ideas reminded me of a concept called pentimento. This term refers to how artists often change their minds as they work through a painting and their original drawings and ideas are often layered and painted over (McRorie, 1997). When paintings age and fade these earlier marks and ideas are revealed. Like the term, it seems that earlier theories are not painted over forever but linger like pentimento ghosts and result in conflicting ideas and theories for teachers. Teachers are caught between earlier movements that promote student self-expression and those, which emphasise traditional skills based approaches. In the former approach the teacher acts as a facilitator who does not interfere with the creativity and originality of child whereas the Modernist and formalist approach promotes learning from artist models and established art conventions. This tension has since been heightened by the relativistic influence of postmodernism, which argues against any but a purely subjective (relative) assessment of art practice.

However, before discussing assessment in art specifically, it is important to outline some of the purposes, definitions and stakeholders in the assessment field. The next section discusses these aspects within the general context of educational assessment.

1. Forms and purposes of assessment

Boughton (1996) describes three types of assessment relevant to this study: *summative, formative and diagnostic.* First, gate keeping or *summative,* includes high stakes examinations and tests used to sort students for further educational opportunities. Summative testing involves assessing learning at some end point and has traditionally

used norm referencing to rank students, and scale marks to predetermined means. School Certificate, 6th Form Certificate and Bursary Art examinations are all examples of summative, high stakes assessment. Second, *formative assessment* is described as part of ongoing teaching practice aimed to identify students' strengths and weaknesses and to inform the teaching process. In art education this may include classroom observation, workbooks, discussion and the naturally occurring dialogue between teacher and student in the art room. Formative assessment aims to improve student learning through self-assessment, peer assessments and teacher feedback. Finally, *diagnostic* assessment is aimed at placing students correctly into programmes or finding out what may be causing deficiencies in learning such as PAT reading tests. Hill (1998) describes how appropriate diagnostic assessment may reveal the reason for a student's lack of progress as well as enable teachers to plan further learning to meet the needs of individual students.

There are also new forms of assessment. Amongst these is *standards based assessment* that aims to establish levels of achievement by describing clear and transparent criteria for students to achieve. Standards based assessment is not ranked or norm referenced. This study has taken place during the transition from norm-referenced examinations to standards based assessment at year 11. The first level of NCEA (National Certificate of Educational Achievement) was introduced in New Zealand schools during 2002. The assessment outcomes for Level 1 (year 11) reflect current teaching practice at that level and are based on the School Certificate prescription. There is debate, however, whether outcomes can be anything more than very generic and the difficulties art teachers face over interpreting assessment statements may well continue.

These methods link to other recent approaches in evaluation, which include *naturalistic evaluation*, a negotiated approach between teacher and student. Educational *connoisseurship* promoted by Eisner (1996) involves a highly skilled teacher helping a student develop a level of awareness of their own meanings of their studies. To evaluate the teacher observes, interacts and makes qualitative judgements. Other alternative assessment methods include use of *portfolios* to build a rich and diverse picture of what students can do over time. Eisner (1996:2) argues that authentic

assessment has "challenged the dominance of psychometrically developed standardized tests with a desire to replace them with assessment procedures that provide more meaningful and relevant information about students."

2. The terminology debate

Boughton (1996) states there is debate about the terminology used in assessment. Measurement and assessment are key terms and are defined by Aspinwall, cited in McGee (1997:174) as follows:

> *Evaluation* is defined as collecting information and making judgements which lead to decision making; *measurement* is described as the gathering of information part of the process which can lead to statements of performance; *assessment* is an activity that involves using the information from measurement to make sense out of it and to assign a grade, mark or some other categorisation related to a scale.

Within assessment practice there are further terms such as *scaling* and *norm referencing*. These are commonly used assessment tools, traditionally used to adjust marks. Other terms such as *formative assessment* are used in different ways. Harlen (1998) acknowledges that even on-going or continuous assessment may not be formative if in reality this is a series of short summative tests. She likes to use the term, "assessment for formative purposes" when referring to assessment intended to support learning.

The terms, *standards* and *criteria* are also used in different contexts. Criteria usually describe learning outcomes specifically although they can also be used to describe behaviours as well. The word *standard* can be used generally as an ideal or level of performance to be aspired to, while it can also refer to a description of a specific and agreed outcome that students need to achieve to receive a qualification. The word standard is sometimes used to describe the qualification itself and has replaced exam or test in some situations. For example the *National Certificate of Educational Achievement* or NCEA uses the term Achievement Standards for the title of each assessment unit. The expansion of thinking about assessment has also lead to a variety

of new terms that have come into common usage through the New Zealand Curriculum Framework documents (1995, 2001). Such terms include, transparent, authentic, reliability, feed forward, feedback, learning outcomes and next steps. Hill (2001) lists words from Government documents which represent the culture of assessment in self managing schools such as accountability, levels, records, requirements, barriers to learning, standards, achievement, formative, checklist, summative. Similar words found in this study included formative, standards, summative, grades, reports, records, systems, transparent, valid, feedback, feed forward, next steps and criteria.

Hill (2001) found that such terms were used and interpreted differently by different teachers "signaling intersections between managerial and educational discourses." This study also found different interpretations of terminology between teachers and official documents. The Arts Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2001:91) states that "effective assessment promotes students' learning, raises standards and reduces disparity of achievement." Some teachers used standard in a specific way to refer to standards based assessment. They also described general class levels of performance as standards, included their own personal standards and had opinions about the standards of other teachers. Two teachers described standards as something fixed that students could try to achieve.

Stakeholders

Within the assessment field there are many stakeholders including students, teachers, parents, employers, private and state schools, teacher unions, school boards, and government and assessment authorities. Their interests and needs can conflict. The influence and power of assessment for qualifications in learning is sometimes underestimated in education.

> Educational qualifications are not just a formal system for the recognition of competence. They are more importantly a currency, possession of which bestows social status and wealth (Capper cited in Hood, 1997:106).

This statement means that students and parents have much at stake in the examination system and this can lead to schools promoting themselves on their examination successes through published league tables. League tables have become commonplace in New Zealand in recent times and are published tables comparing school examination results from best to worst. Hughes and Lauder (1990) argue that there is a strong relationship between socio-economic background and examination success. This suggests that league tables do not provide an accurate picture of schools achievements, as factors such as decile ratings, school size, and other variables have not been taken into account. Many private schools prefer traditional examinations and perform well in these and have a vested interest in examinations in which they do well.

Government interest in assessment has been seen recently in the shift to standards based assessment and new curricula based on learning outcomes and performance levels of achievement. Some commentators see these new assessment methods as a way for government to check on teacher performance by monitoring standards, comparing school performances and ensuring value for money. McGee (1997: 175) cites Print saying that "in times of high public demand for accountability, as seen recently, in the 1990s, the emphasis goes to a narrower type of assessment."

These debates about art in education, in New Zealand Curricula, and assessment in general, form the context for the present research study of art assessment. The next section discusses art education specifically and some of the main arguments surrounding its assessment.

Assessment in Art education: what is measurable?

This section discusses the context of art assessment in New Zealand and refers to year 11 art in particular to illustrate key issues. Art educators are required by the Ministry of Education and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority through examination prescriptions to provide teaching programmes which will enable their students to achieve specific art outcomes in order to be marked or graded for examination purposes. Summative assessments, such as School Certificate Art, Sixth Form

Certificate Art and Bursary Art are all based on establishing rank orders of competing students to gain qualifications and entry to tertiary institutions. The new NCEA examination at year 11, continues to emphasise summative art outcomes. Teachers also have curriculum responsibilities under the National Educational Guidelines (2001) to improve learning in art education, develop art skills, and enable students to learn and use methods to meet specified curriculum outcomes.

How and what do we assess in art? There are many answers to this question situated in different discourses about art and assessment. The following sections consider each of the four main areas of debate about assessing student artwork. These include: first whether practical work on its own can provide enough evidence of student learning to make valid judgements; second, what constitutes a good art teaching programme for examinations; third, how much teacher intervention and direction is reasonable; and fourth, can art assessment avoid issues of subjectivity and objectivity.

Jackson (2000:8) describes common discourses that have become ingrained in art assessment at all levels as follows:

> First that student achievement can be judged by looking at the physical artwork. This practice has a weight of tradition behind it and a focus on artifact in which connoisseurship is important; second is the assumption that students develop progressively to develop their best artwork; thirdly is the notion that a concept of "final assessment" is useful and valid; finally work is commonly taken away by teachers to be marked as it seems that only tutors are adequately informed, experienced and reliable to make these important judgements.

These assumptions reflect assessment practice at secondary level in New Zealand. For School Certificate Art students are required to present a four-panel portfolio and a fifty-page workbook. Work is developed progressively and presented at the end of the year for assessment. The work is internally assessed by classroom teachers and samples moderated externally by panels of teachers. These teachers moderate to establish national standards using a system of benchmarks. Through this process,

valid rank orders and percentage marks are established to determine national standards. The Level 1, externally moderated Achievement Standard requires students to submit a three-panel portfolio, which is moderated in the same way.

1. Reliance on practical work for assessment of art

Parsons (1996) debates whether the commonly accepted practice of relying solely on visual portfolio evidence manifested in studio products is sufficient to understand and gain a complete picture of students' art learning. He argues that this:

> ...restricts those processes to working with the purely visual character of the work, and by definition, it excludes reference to the cultural world that lies outside the work (Parsons, 1996:60).

Parsons (1996:20) further argues that artwork must be "interpreted, and language provides a framework of meaning that makes culturally constructed interpretation possible." He also challenges the idea that studio work provides evidence of students' understanding of concepts in art. He questions whether students understand or merely follow the instructions of the teacher and suggests that the best way to get at relevant understandings is to discuss student work. This approach is seen in other art examinations such as the International Baccalaureate curriculum (2001) where students have an interview opportunity to explain their exhibited work. Jackson (2000) agrees with this approach, arguing that the individual nature of the work being assessed makes it almost certain that the person with the best understanding of the objectives is likely to be the students themselves. Chalmers (2001:86) however questions the idea that it is only the maker that can know art. He references this to the progressive ideas of the first three quarters of the 20th century and challenges such notions as being outdated and disproved. The debate about relying on students' practical work for assessing inevitably links to issues about designing art programmes which will facilitate good results for students.

2. Issues surrounding programme design for exams

The choices for teachers when designing programmes for examinations are difficult because of the competing discourses surrounding art education. The two main approaches of student centered (Progressivism), and formalist/artist model (Modernist) reflect discourses that have been dominant at various times in New Zealand art education. Orme (1988) comments how change in art education philosophy has profound implications for assessment. This is because evaluation of artwork is based on the values held by that particular society or culture and these are not fixed or permanent but tend to change along with society's cultural values. Orme (1988:8) states:

> If the prevailing art education ideology is changing without teachers being informed that this is happening, the possibility arises that teachers who continue to adhere to child centered art education activities may find their students seriously disadvantaged when their work is compared to those of students whose teachers are using the artist model approach.

The School Certificate prescription (Department of Education, 1976) was based around four objectives of perceptual ability, creative imagination, critical faculty, and technical skills. These aims reflected Tovey's (Department of Education, 1978) beliefs that artmaking was intuitive, imaginative and child centered. Students were expected to perceive and interpret the environment in original terms, to express feelings, to develop personal techniques and to be able to talk and write about their own and others work. The School Certificate course was designed to encourage students to explore and enjoy as diverse a range of art and craft activities as practicable and to comment personally on their observations and discoveries (Department of Education, 1976:2).

Orme's (1988) research found that art teachers were insecure about the interpretation of criteria being used for assessing the School Certificate examination and claimed the examination did not provide adequate leads about suitable artworks for submission.

This uncertainty affects how teachers design programmes with appropriate examination content and is seen in other art examinations. Stirling (2001:27) reported public debate about Bursary assessment in the New Zealand Listener saying:

> There seems to be a bizarre cult approach in the examiners for Bursary painting and photography, and if schools are part of the mystique and their students present work in the preferred way they are rewarded handsomely.

As stated previously, teachers find themselves in an environment of competing discourses about art education and assessment. Langton (2001) raises questions with primary teachers about the influence of Progressivism asking participants whether the discourse that art should be fun and not academic is counterproductive to teaching and assessing in art education. Barry and Townsend (1995) found that teachers interviewed in their study described judging student artworks as a complex process because of the expressive nature and degree of original thought reflected in the work. Both these studies suggest how participants construct a view of art education representing progressive student centered discourses.

Rush (1996) however supports a teacher-centred instruction approach against a student or child centred one. She argues that when artists create images, they set and solve their own aesthetic problems and eventually students learn to do the same. Both Rush (1996) and Schonau (1996) argue that art education based on a problem solving approach can provide focused programmes which enable teachers to evaluate studio art learning validly:

> Conceptually focused lessons enable teachers to evaluate studio art learning because images made in order to solve problems contain observable concepts and therefore testify to the acquisition of these concepts by students (Rush 1996:42).

This approach represents a powerful western formalist discourse based around a vocabulary of art and is seen in the recommendations for the assessment of School

Certificate art in New Zealand. To enable assessment judgements to be made the Department Guidelines for School Certificate art (1976:9,11&17) recommended a basic course covering the recognition and practice of concepts of composition, line, tone, colour, spatial relationships, texture, pattern and form. This discourse of art education identifies teachable aspects of art practice and allows the teacher to assess ability. Atkinson (1998:31) argues, " pupils' art works are compared against sets of criteria relating to proportion, tone, composition, which can be both implicit and explicit. Within such practices and discourses pupils are constituted as powerful (able) or not (less able)."

Formalism has also influenced the development of achievement standard outcomes recently and is seen in Level 1 (year 11), *Achievement Standard 1.3 Generate and develop ideas in making artworks* (NZQA, 2001). To achieve this standard, students must show:

> Evidence of decision-making in the use of media and techniques in recording information and developing ideas from subject matter
> and
> Show that ideas, techniques or conventions from artist's works have been used in own work (NZQA, 2001:3).

Freedman (2001:37) however, questions formalist models by saying that while they appear to simply facilitate an analysis of what is contained within a work of art, they actually condition the way students approach art. Students are taught to approach art as a series of objects about form and feeling isolated from meaning. The assumption that any object can be effectively analysed using such models carries with it the idea that the artifacts of any culture can and should be taught about as if they were fine art. This form of acculturation does not promote an understanding of the peculiarities of fine art and aesthetics, nor does it maintain the integrity of other forms of visual culture and alternative ways of understanding.

3. The degree of teacher direction and intervention

During the 1980s and 1990s the two opposing discourses of a progressive child centered approach, and a formalist, teacher directed approach have polarised views on the degree to which the teacher should intervene in the development of student's artwork. The School Certificate examination encouraged students to self evaluate and too much teacher direction was described as stifling the pupils' critical and creative development. The teacher as assessor was required to be a person of extended experience, assisting the students' critical growth (Department of Education, 1976). However, in the competitive examination environment, teachers will work hard to enable their students to succeed. In New Zealand the Sixth Form Certificate and revised Bursary examinations at year 13 reflect Rush's views and encourage teachers to use a teacher directed and artist model approach. The success of these approaches had a flow on effect on teachers' programme design at lower levels. Recent programmes for year 11 art examinations reflect this direction by being more teacher directed and artist model based. This shift in approach was noted in an Examiners Report (NZQA: 1997) that reminded teachers about the original intentions of the prescription requirements to provide a variety of experience for students at this level:

> It is important that they are not limited to a narrow and slavish reproduction of a single artist model where problems of subject matter and composition are largely solved and do not allow the students the opportunity to develop their own creative imagination or problem solving skills. Programmes need to be designed which allow students the possibility of meeting these objectives and for assessments to be made (NZQA 1997:2).

These shifting discourses create confusion amongst art teachers about the focus of examinations, as they move from a broad and general approach to being more structured and narrow. An effect of high stakes assessment can be a narrow and controlled approach to teaching along with increased teacher direction. Orme (1988:24) had previously raised concerns about an overly teacher directed approach in School Certificate art.

> Under the competitive pressures of examination, some teachers may be assisting their students to an unethical degree.

Orme (1986) cites Bruce who found that cross referencing results of course work with that produced in an examination situation, showed that the quality of the course work differed so markedly from that produced in the examination that frequently examiners concluded that it was not the unaided work of the candidates.

4. Issues of subjectivity and objectivity

Debate about subjectivity in art assessment is common and criticism of art assessment often falls back on allegations of bias, subjectivity and the personal opinion of examiners. Objective judgements can be defined as those dealing with the outward nature of things, or exhibiting actual facts uncoloured by the exhibitors' feelings or opinions (Sykes, 1984). Heyfron (1983) maintains that attempts to be objective in art assessment for reliability and validity are risky because we lose sight of the personal and more subjective aspects of artmaking. He identifies the central debate as:

> The attempt to support the claim that judgements in art can be objective trades too heavily on similarities between art and science, rather than the differences, thus obscuring the crucial aspects of the problem of assessment in the arts (Heyfron cited in Ross, 1983:56).

Eisner (1996) supports Heyfron's arguments about scientific rationalism and subjectivity in the following:

> Evaluation and testing participate in a tradition that puts a premium on predictability, rationality, and precision, features not typically associated with emotional, unpredictable, and ambiguous features of the artistic process (Eisner, 1996:1).

A. F. Chalmers (1982) however, questions the notion that scientific knowledge is completely objective by saying that scientific knowledge is not proven but represents

knowledge that is probably true and that the greater number of observations made relating to an induction or theory the greater probability that the resulting generalisations are true. A. F. Chalmers (1982:17) also questions objectivity on the grounds of perception, which is "influenced by our inner state of mind or brain which will depend on our cultural upbringing, our knowledge, expectations etc.- and will not be determined solely by the physical properties of our eyes and what is observed."

If objectivity is as elusive as A. F. Chalmers (1982) argues then efforts to establish objective art assessment practices will always be problematic. Subjectivity can be described in art as being dependent on personal idiosyncrasy or individual point of view, and not producing the effect of literal or impartial transcription of external realities (Sykes, 1984). Orme (1986:24) argues that the risk of injustice is greatest in art because:

> Art judgements derive from a largely subjective viewpoint. Although the prescription purports to examine candidates on their knowledge and understanding it is not entirely possible to achieve or display such qualities in a practical area. The examination's assessment is not derived from measuring factual information. Art evaluation is almost entirely values based.

Subjectivity is usually seen as a negative state and the current emphasis by educational administrators on objectivity and reliability in assessment is reflected in an Education Review Office report (1999:29). This report into student assessment practices in primary schools states that "teachers in many schools had not established meaningful and manageable procedures for the assessment of art... and that in many schools this was highly dependent on subjective judgements."

This makes art difficult to assess as both evaluative and descriptive elements are involved. Disagreements can occur about the merits of a work even though both parties may agree about the descriptive properties. Heyfron (1983) claims that judgements in art are always open to a variety of interpretations and evaluations depending on differing positions and discourses. This complicating factor shows that

in judgements about art it is possible for disagreement to occur without either party being wrong.

The recent standards based assessment discourse argues that the use of clearly stated assessment criteria will lead to more objective assessment in art education. Boughton (1997) however, argues that it is difficult to express clearly in words, conceptions of the complex outcomes (or standards of performance) in visual arts production, and that attempts to do so will result in ambiguity, or reductionism. Boughton, Eisner, Haynes and Parsons (1996) argue that it is difficult to assess something that has multiple outcomes, encourages diversity and contains personal content and meaning.

It seems that the four aspects of art assessment outlined interrelate in the way art education functions and how it is assessed. The reliance and constraints on practical portfolio work means that there is little space for students and teachers to produce work that is personally expressive or layered with meaning. It seems that some approaches to art education help students prepare for examinations more than others. Formalist, structured and teacher directed approaches establish clearer criteria for assessment whereas more open ended, self-directed and personally expressive programmes are harder to assess. As art assessment is bound within a subjective domain, to achieve well, work needs to demonstrate skills and content, which demonstrates use of formal elements and skills recognizable within a formalist position. This means that it is critical for teachers to be aware of the assessment environment when developing programmes for their students. The following section outlines the implications for this research study.

Focus of the research study

The uncertain and contested field of art education leads to questions about: how do art teachers know what is required content for examinations; how much teacher direction is acceptable in art teaching; and how can teachers have access to both explicit and implicit criteria for making assessment judgements. These issues have been central to on going debates in art assessment in New Zealand, and have emerged as questions in this research study. The issues emerging from this discussion

illustrated by changing Year 11 art programmes reflect alternating curriculum and assessment discourses. These divergent positions cause difficulties for teachers when trying to understand how to teach their students and enable them to succeed in the examination structure. Like the original lines in a painting that have been changed and painted over, waiting to be rediscovered, through the process previously referred to as pentimento, the actions and language of art teachers are influenced and reconstructed by differing art education discourses.

This study uses discourse analysis to analyse the language and practice of a group of secondary art teachers. The study also involves an analysis of the art examination context and the influences on teachers. It seems that academic status, subject credibility, and a strong sense of professionalism influence art teachers. Other questions relate to the complexities of assessing art education when the subject lacks specific content and is philosophically contested. This creates a difficult field for art teachers to work in and several of these issues are described and situated against the literature of assessment. These issues are discussed in the findings chapters. The following chapter describes the methodology used to structure the approach and the methods used to complete the study.

Chapter 3: The Methodology

This chapter outlines the qualitative methodology used to conduct this study and the rationale for this. I will explain the research design and methods used to gather, analyse and made sense of the data. I also outline the choices I had in writing up the findings.

Theoretical rationale

Neuman (1997) defines qualitative research as a method that focuses on interactive processes and events, and which also constructs social reality and cultural meaning. Qualitative methods provide a researcher with valuable insights into what people say, what they do, and what they say about what they do within particular environments. Eisner (1979) argues that conventional scientific approaches in educational research have been limited in yielding results because they often try to isolate the factors that lead to changes in educational situations. He argues that knowing more about the process of educational practice is important and particularly how teachers' behaviours must be seen as part of a larger context. He also argues how we must find out more about the kinds of meanings that individuals construct as part of the environments in which they live. Fielding, (1996:11) supports Eisner's view, arguing "that when studying human beings and their artistic outputs, alternative constructs must be used and recognised as valid descriptors of behaviour and meaning."

A qualitative approach was seen as appropriate for this project as the field of art education that teachers work in is continually being redefined and reconstructed. The following story, which I observed some years ago, illustrates how some of these discourses impact on teacher assessment and why a qualitative approach was used. At a national moderation meeting, a school sample of folios was presented which included Maori words and phrases using an expressive style and technique. The assessors assessed the work from a formalist perspective and did not find it necessary to find out the meaning of the words and how these brought meaning to the artwork, even when challenged by another assessor of Maori heritage. The work was marked down significantly and the folios at the lower end of the sample were given such low marks that they would have failed the examination. Another assessor challenged the

result and after considerable debate and a subsequent investigation of the meaning behind the words, the work was reconsidered and the marks adjusted significantly to the benefit of the students. This story illustrates how a dominant discourse can influence the decision-making involved in a particular situation. The alignment of the assessors with the dominant western, formalist discourse effectively rendered artistic qualities from the other culture invisible. The other discourse involved in this situation represented a different cultural framework and construction of meaning.

This story illustrates the competing discourses surrounding the art field and art education and why a qualitative approach was seen as appropriate in this study. What teachers say about their practices and experiences provides insight into the field of art education that is continually being redefined and reconstructed. To gather data for this study the following decisions were made about particular qualitative research methods. These are described in the following section.

Research Design

Data for this study came primarily from listening to teachers' conversations and observing their actions during art assessment events. I wanted to encourage participants to talk openly about their assessment practice and not lead them. As an art educator myself I was aware that my own experience and preferences could influence how I went about this study. Unstructured interviews were used to initiate conversations with teachers and to encourage them to follow their own interests and issues. Kvale cited in Hill (2001:7) explains that an unstructured interview contains "an openness to changes in sequences and forms of questions in order to follow up the answers given and stories told by participants." This was important in this study as the conversations and observations of teachers during the initial interviews helped to refocus discussions during follow- up visits.

I also carried out a document analysis of the assessment materials provided by the participants. I examined the language of these to establish links, which supported and added to the meanings emerging from the conversational transcriptions. Clandinin and Connelly (2000: 114) describe:

> How easy it is to forget or ignore the existence and relevance of documents. The researcher who establishes intimate participant relations can become so focused on the relationship that the flow of documents that help conceptualise the work goes unnoticed.

This was certainly the case for me as I had collected these documents early in the research process but left the analysis until I was well into the writing up stage. These documents had lain buried beneath layers of conversational transcripts and were only rediscovered at later date after reading Clandinin and Connelly (2000).

I also used the stimulated recall method which involved videoing an assessment event and playing this back to participants to stimulate discussion on aspects of assessment dialogue and practice. The video was also useful as a permanent record, which was available for ongoing analysis as the research question was redefined and particular themes emerged.

Another aspect of qualitative research is the recording of field notes. I made notes during and after interviews and observations and also used this method to note down hunches and initial themes.

In addition to the data collection methods used, the complexity of the field I was researching meant that I continually needed to search the literature to understand the discourses that related to art assessment. This provided insights into issues in the field, indicating new directions and leads. Taylor and Bogdan (1998:146) support this stating:

> How you interpret your data depends on your theoretical assumptions. It is important to expose yourself to theoretical frameworks during the intensive analysis stage of the research. Our own theoretical framework, symbolic interactionism, leads to looking for social perspectives and definitions.

They propose such questions: as how people define themselves, others, their settings and activities; how do these develop and change; and what is the fit between different perspectives held by different people. Geertz in Norman and Denzin (1998) warns us that there is no world of social facts out there waiting to be observed, recorded, described and analysed by the inquirer. It has become much clearer to me during deeper analysis of the data and searching the literature that language and actions of teachers can be constructed into typologies that reflect particular discourses about art education and assessment.

Ethics

Careful attention was given to ethical issues in this study. Copies of information letters and consent forms are attached as appendix B. The only people to have seen the data are the researcher, the supervisors and typist/transcriber. The Christchurch College of Education Ethics Committee approved the research proposal. The data will be kept for a period of three years and has been used specifically for this thesis, and any related conference papers, journal articles or reports, which may follow.

Methods

The Participants

The teachers were all from Christchurch and part of a Professional Development programme during 2000. I knew some of these teachers socially and also professionally through my working contacts as an Adviser at the Christchurch College of Education.

Three female and three male teachers participated. The schools were similar sizes and included state, private, co-educational, single sex and semi rural school types. All the teachers were trained and three were practicing artists. A cross section of teachers was included with a range of teaching experience. All schools and teachers involved in the study have been given pseudonyms. The schools and teachers are as follows:

(a) Carole, Louise and Janet worked at Central School a large single sex city school. Carole the HOD was an experienced teacher and had some examination involvement.

Louise was a third year teacher and practicing artist. Janet had been teaching for several years with experience in several schools. Their class sizes ranged from fifteen to twenty students.

(b) Steve and Henry were beginning teachers at Hill High School a large co-ed semi rural school in Mid Canterbury. Steve had twenty-two students in his class while Henry had twenty-four.

(c) Anthony is at Main School, a large co-educational city school. Anthony was educated overseas but teacher trained in New Zealand and has been teaching for three years. Anthony began the year with twenty students in his class but this had reduced to fifteen at the time of the study.

Time and length of study

Interviews took place during 2000 as part of a pilot study and were completed in 2001. The first meetings were about one hour long and held in teacher's offices and classrooms. The second sessions were over two hours and involved videoing teachers moving around folios marking workbooks and folders. These sessions were all in classrooms and took place during the day, and after school. A third session involved viewing and discussing the video using the stimulated recall method.

Methods for gathering data

As stated previously, the main methods used were unstructured interviews (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998), participant observations in school settings, and document analysis. As I already knew the teachers I was able to make an advisory visit as well, which suited some of the teachers. The first meetings were friendly and informal and intended to inform teachers about the study and talk generally about themselves, their work, and assessment and to arrange a second visit. The teachers were advised that generally we would discuss how they were assessing at year 11. Starter questions included: how teachers were assessing, what their experience and background was, and how they worked together.

The second visit involved observing teachers assessing student artwork and videos were made in two of the three schools involved. During these sessions I resisted joining in with the teachers dialogue although I was tempted as a teacher and former examiner. Taylor and Bogdan (1998) state that participant observers almost always influence the settings they study. At Hill High school I helped Steve and Henry with a summative assessment event as an Advisor, before I videoed the teachers working. When I moved into my researcher role I tried to remove myself from dialogue and tried not to lead or direct. As Anthony was working very much by himself at Main School I was fully involved discussing the student work and joining in the dialogue as we considered the student folios. It was clear that the less experienced teachers and the sole teacher were keen to engage in dialogue about their assessment of student artworks. This indicates a need for these teachers to assess collaboratively

The conversations taped by Dictaphone and recorded on video were transcribed using secretarial assistance. The resulting data consisted of three sets of field notes and three sets of transcriptions. There are also two videos of groups of teachers from Central and Hill High Schools assessing student work, and photographs and field notes from Main School. As Anthony was working alone, photographs were made of the folios to create a visual record of the work being assessed.

A third session involved playing back the video to the teachers to stimulate conversations. Although using the video seemed intrusive, the teachers commented that they felt relaxed about the process. I did note however, that Steve drew attention to being filmed and talked to the camera at one stage during the video session.

Field notes were made at the site and constructed later. These included background information and further observations written up afterwards. I also presented initial findings at the National Art Educators' Conference in Hamilton in 2001 and had a colleague record the discussions and responses. A journal has been kept as personal diary as a place to record hunches about developing themes, note down and capture ideas, references, leads and notes from meetings with supervisors. The journal has

become an increasingly important tool to reflect on the data collected and to begin to make sense of it.

I asked teachers for feedback on the interview methods used during the meetings held with them. The Dictaphone and interview sessions went well and the teachers were relaxed and appeared confident about talking while being recorded. The teachers have seen copies of the transcripts from the interviews and these were used to direct conversations at the third session when the video was played and discussed.

Data analysis

The data was coded using methods recommended by Taylor and Bogdan (1998) and was also read and coded by professional colleagues as well. Main methods included close reading and the constant comparative method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) to establish initial codes and compare categories. Through this, new typological dimensions and relationships may be discovered. Transcripts from each school were copied onto different coloured papers for identification. Codes were written in the margins of the transcripts and then sections cut up and filed in envelopes. This resulted in the following initial groupings of the data: making judgements; feeling responsible; working together; giving feedback; feeling anxious; and comments about their students.

A further analysis used Taylor and Bogdan's (1998) strategy to organise the data following their eight steps starting with identifying topics of conversation through to developing possible typologies, constructs and codes. The vocabulary included recurring words such as "strong", "consistent or inconsistent" and "nice", and more specific language when describing work or techniques such as "paint handling", "planning a picture", and "formulaic." Surprisingly there was not a lot of specific art terminology used and language tended to be more general and related to comparisons between students. The recurring activities noted included sorting and ranking work, giving formative feedback to students, and visualising concepts or problems with students. Some of the teachers used expressions to describe assessment and marking which included "predictions in a crystal ball", and "setting students up for a fall." The

feelings most commonly described were about inexperience and concern about being too generous with marks, and sense of responsibility for students by teachers. These categories supported the initial groupings developed from the constant comparative method.

Possible typologies that emerged from the coding exercises included methods of assessment, formative feedback, and teachers talking about being professionally responsible, about working together and about experience. Some categories were able to merge, such as teacher responsibilities, the need for experience, and the need to work together, which all became coded as professional issues. Emerging propositions included professional credibility, the status of art education, teaching and learning discourses. There were also possible themes relating to ideas of "acceptable practice" and how teachers become familiar with implicit standards built up by a community of art teachers.

These themes were supported by an analysis of the transcriptions by a professional colleague who sorted the data into three broad areas. These included: general assessment language; what teachers say about a student's artwork when assessing, and the methods teachers use to assess students' artwork? The peer review also indicated an emerging theme related to the confidence of teachers to assess and how they apply their assessment procedures. The reviewer felt that Steve was unconvincing when he talked about the importance of students generating discussion amongst them. His lack of confidence and experience was evident in his speech as his sentences were often unfinished and he stopped in mid sentence. Examples of this appeared as "the students ...actually there is a direct benefit. We do have a grade system... And we make that... when they like... for the exam.... we gave them some grades." However this may also indicate a difficulty in finding the right words, struggling to articulate ideas, to explain his approaches clearly or may simply have been nervousness at being interviewed.

As themes emerged, I returned to the literature to see what assessment and art educational theorists had to say. This motivated me to interpret the data in alternative

ways. I compiled word lists about how teachers described art assessment, how they described themselves as assessors, how they described art and how they described their students. The word lists were also useful to indicate gaps and missing words that could be expected to be present in the data. For example there were plenty of words describing the assessment of skills and techniques but few words about understandings that students may have. These word lists were classified into new typologies including teachers' assessment practices, curriculum content, and about their students. From these typologies, new propositions emerged about teachers' professionalism, descriptions about their students' abilities, and reflections about teaching and assessing.

I also adapted a typology table from Tunstall and Gipps (1998) that is included as appendix C. Tunstall and Gipps (1998:393) argue, "that within evaluative types of feedback, judgements are made according to explicit or implicit norms (conitive/affective) whereas descriptive types of feedback more clearly relates to actual competence (cognitive)." Through this new way of looking at the data patterns appeared in the evaluative side of the typology related to student intelligence, abilities and behaviours.

An analysis of assessment documents found that these documents were different in structure and detail from the three schools. These included assessment schedules describing ABA (Achievement Based Assessment) criteria, descriptors and grade categories and copies of feedback forms with teachers' notes and comments contained records about student achievements, attitudes and abilities. For example at Main School the informal feedback form had sections for comment by the teacher and student to describe what was being done well and what to do to improve. Words from the documents that teachers had given me were also grouped in this way. There were four categories: *mechanical skills* such as gluing work into books, *technical skills* such as using equipment competently, *understanding concepts* such as selecting and analysing ideas and *desirable attitudes and social traits* such as being co-operative.

Strategies for representation

Strategies for writing up include descriptive methods and the development of meaning and propositions through social constructionist devices. Burr's (1995:6) definition of social constructionist theory argues that:

> We construct our own versions of reality as a culture or society between us...all knowledge is derived from looking at the world from some perspective or other and is in the service of some interests rather than others.

Descriptive writing was used initially to paint a picture of teachers' assessment practice and what they were saying about assessment. Through this I was trying to allow the teachers voices to come through. Clandinin and Connelly (1998:169) state:

> When we enter into a research relationship with participants and ask them to share their stories with us there is the potential to shape their lived, told, relived, retold stories as well as our own. These intensive relationships require serious consideration of who we are as researchers in the stories of participants for when we become characters in their stories, we change their stories.

The interrelationship of my own perspective and background with the data collected from the teachers' conversations interwove through the inquiry process and became part of the process of creating meaning about the process of classroom assessment. It was a revelation to read Richardson (1998) who describes the process of writing qualitative material, as too often being not interesting because:

> Adherence to the model too often requires the writers to silence their own voices and to view themselves as contaminants.... I write because I want to find something out. I write in order to learn something that I didn't know before I wrote it (Richardson, 1998:347).

This proved to be the case for me as the writing up stage became an important part of the research process to re-evaluate approaches and methods. The writing process

continually evolved as I read the literature. Burr (1995) provided insights into social constructionist methods, which took me beyond descriptive writing to develop propositions and provide explanations. Burr (1995:4) describes how "our current accepted ways of understanding the world is a product not of objective observation of the world, but of the social processes and interactions in which people are constantly engaged with each other." As my writing evolved, the research question was redefined. Originally the research focus had been to find out how teachers went about assessing art. This was refocused into how they position themselves and are affected by the competing discourses in art education. It seemed that the data analysis and writing processes informed each other.

To explain this evolving research and writing process the concept of pentimento was used. This reference, introduced in Chapter two, was threaded through the writing to draw parallels between art education and research through the visual processes involved of looking, revisiting and seeing again the data and methods I was using. I also used a metaphor introduced in chapter one, related to my own printmaking practice, to draw links between the complex field of art education, research methods and analysis. Wood block printmaking involves separate blocks, which must be combined with the others to complete the whole print.

The writing process reflected the continual interplay between the data and the literature. This resulted in the research question being refocussed and emerging propositions being tested and retested against both literature and data analysis. This dynamic process wove through the research process, informing the analysis, development of propositions and findings.

Researcher's position

Richardson (1998) recommends using narratives and including the researcher's own voice and position as a participant in research. My position was, and still is, that of an "insider" with 20 years experience as an art educator. Since 1983, I have been involved with, and interested in, the issues surrounding art assessment as expressed through the conversations of art teachers.

During this research study I found myself involved in a process, which lead me to reflect upon, see again, and question my own practice and actions about art teaching and assessing. McRorie (1996) describes how this process of seeing and then seeing again, lays a foundation for and describes the process of research in general, and philosophical inquiry in art and art education in particular.

I acknowledge that my experience in art assessment influenced my approach, interpretation, analysis and selection of themes for writing up. McRorie (1996:7) states that the quality of our reasoning is shaped by the premises from which we work. When we think by ourselves, our deductions are derived from premises we already hold, and our conclusions may tend to be unsurprising or unrevealing. This is also the case when teachers are assessing student work. It is important to look to other ideas and research, in a sort of conversation or dialogue, in order to revitalise the reasoning process. Punch (1998:158) reminds us that the central point that much field research is:

> Dependent on one person's perception of the field situation at a given time and that perception is shaped by both the personality and nature of the interaction with the researched and that this makes the researcher his or her own research instrument.

Richardson (1998:346) endorses this saying, "I encourage researchers to explore their own processes and preferences through writing, and rewriting and rewriting. We will be more fully present in our work, more honest, more engaged." Self-reflection was an important part of the research process. It helped me to consider and make sense of the complex interrelationships about art education, assessment and students themselves that are part of the assessment process. This also meant that a qualitative approach was appropriate for the type of data I wished to gather in the study.

Emerging themes

Three main themes emerged from the analysis and are presented in the following three findings chapters as interconnecting layers, which play a part in affecting how

teachers make their judgment decisions. The first theme reflects particular educational and assessment discourses that influence teachers' daily classroom interactions with their students. This includes descriptions of their formative assessment methods and their beliefs about good teaching and assessment practice. The second theme discusses the examination discourses that create professional pressures for art teachers. The final theme completes the third layer, in the study. This outlines how individual experience, backgrounds, and assumptions of teachers reflect traditional discourses about intelligence and ability and behaviour. These discourses are a powerful force in making judgements and are discussed fully in the following chapters.

Chapter 4: Every day assessment: current assessment practices of art teachers

"Cos I figure they are going to get more out of it"

Introduction

This chapter discusses how new assessment discourses such as formative assessment and standards based methods were viewed and used in the classroom by the art teachers interviewed in this study. While standards based methods are used for summative assessments they have influenced the way teachers describe art outcomes. Government initiatives such as ABEL (Assessment for Better Learning) encourage schools to use new assessment practices to enhance learning. Where it seems appropriate I have linked their comments with relevant arguments from the literature.

The chapter is divided into three areas of discussion. The first part outlines how and why teachers use formative assessment methods, such as giving feedback, encouraging criticism and self and peer assessment. This includes how their language constructs a view about increased self-esteem and confidence for students as a result of using formative assessment. The second part considers the influence that new standard based discourses have on teachers' assessment practice in art. This briefly includes the influence of managerialism through increasing tracking and reporting requirements. The third part discusses how formative classroom assessment methods are compromised by summative requirements.

Formative assessment discourse includes views that assessment should be used to improve learning rather than used for ranking and marking students. In this chapter I have used Harlen's (1998:3) definition of formative assessment:

> That teachers must be involved in gathering and using information about pupils' learning and encouraging pupils to review their work critically and constructively. It is in the use of this information gathered that assessment for formative purposes is distinguished from assessment for other purposes.

Sadler, cited in Tunstall and Gipps (1996) describes how feedback is crucial in learning and he identifies the way in which feedback should be used by teachers to unpack the notion of excellence which is part of their guild knowledge so that students are able to acquire the knowledge for themselves. Guild knowledge is explained by Jackson (2000) as the complex interrelationship of skills, knowledge, and understanding acquired in art education. Some of this is explicit and factual but a more significant part is the understanding of practice itself. Learning through practice helps the reflective practitioner to construct a personal knowledge base. While individually formulated, this knowledge base shares common conceptions with others involved in making art, and amounts to a tacit theory of art and art values.

> Unlike other academic subjects (art) has only a small body of factual knowledge that a student has to acquire and which can be assessed. There are an infinite number of right answers to any problem, but not all answers are right. The theoretical understanding has to be gained by practice and reflection (Jackson: 1998:7).

It is this guild knowledge and subsequent dialogue about art and art practice between teacher and student that teachers seem to enjoy. The teachers in this study described different ways of doing this. The teachers at Central school unpacked guild knowledge through explicit assessment criteria, which students use to help them understand what levels of performance are required to achieve well. Steve uses group discussions and encourages student involvement in critique sessions where work is spread out and discussed. Anthony uses a display wall as well as self-assessment critical reflection methods where students analyse their own work and write comments about it. Other methods used by Steve and Henry to explain the criteria of a successful artwork, include task sheets and visual exemplars. Tasksheets outline the activity to be completed using listed tasks including formats, media and size of works to describe each step of the process.

Classroom assessment

Teachers in this study described how they were now using criteria and descriptors to assess student work during the year in a formative way. They stated that using explicit outcomes seemed to be beneficial for students to help them improve and achieve in art. The formalist discourse in art used by many teachers to structure programmes and assess student outcomes also underpins the new art achievement standards in New Zealand. For example the criteria for a year 11 Achievement Standard in drawing requires students to:

> Record sufficient and appropriate information from subject matter to demonstrate basic drawing and compositional conventions
> and
> Demonstrate some control of wet and dry media (NZQA, 2001: 3).

At Central School the teachers described all their assessment as standards based. They had developed detailed criteria covering five levels of student performance with one being lowest and five being highest. These teachers felt that using criteria meant that they were thorough and clear in their approach to assessment. Some writers e.g. Eisner(1996), Boughton(1996) see the use of standards based assessment as another way of reducing teachers' autonomy and leading to fragmentation of content and assessing in a mechanistic and reductionist way.
Boughton(1997:202) argues:

> ...whether standards are possible or desirable in art education where divergence of outcome is desired and also because words are limited in the degree to which they can convey unambiguous meaning about visual qualities.

This raises old arguments about formalist or self-expressive approaches and to what extent art can be assessed reliably. Haynes (1996) argues that art education is made up of multi layered structures of meaning which resist attempts at reductionism. She feels that to do this runs the risk of confusing and equating parts of a performance with the

whole. Haynes's concerns are perhaps reflected in Anthony's description of how his criteria would be a break down of different aspects of art practice such as "how is your drawing going, your technique, your colour or something." He also said his criteria were very general and included "the behaviour stuff and the comment." They derived from the School Certificate prescription outcomes of critical faculty, perceptual awareness, creative imagination and personal technique. It seems that Anthony was very aware of the need to be more descriptive and specific in the development of criteria. He was also aware of the need to make the transition towards achievement standards and the NCEA but was uncertain about how to adapt his existing criteria.

Anthony: I don't know what they will be for achievement standards.... I mean maybe they will just be the outcomes.... and perhaps they will break down for that maybe you might have two criteria for each outcome or something.

The teachers at Hill High School were aware of the need to develop criteria as they had inherited an old and very general set from the previous teacher. These reflected behavioural and attitudinal values and they recognised that more specific outcome descriptors were needed to comply with new regulations. Steve referred to the very general set of criteria he had inherited from the previous HOD.

Steve: I found that in a lot of his descriptions, they were not specific enough for me and that is why I try to be specific to a criteria or to something that we are actually doing.

Steve's approach to using criteria appeared to include visual exemplars of what the criteria meant. When asked how he would convey to students what a successful artwork would be like he said:

Steve: Well yeah that's a very good point. I try and use the criteria that we have in the task and try and suggest and give them exemplars...and so that they actually have a visual idea.

The teachers used the word formative to describe classroom assessments. When Steve said "cos I figure they are going to get more out of it" he seems to be indicating a need to assess a broad range of what students learn and can do, rather than focus on narrow summative assessments linked to high stakes examination results. It may be that the term "more out of it" relates to the constraints of summative examinations and he perceives two different processes occurring in the classroom.

The motivation of these teachers to use formative methods reflects Harlen's (1998) claims about good assessment practice. They include the need for students: to receive regular and descriptive feedback about their work; to develop deep understandings through reflection and analysis; to be involved in a dialogue about art concepts with their teachers; to develop skills in identifying their own strengths and weaknesses and to develop confidence, independence and self esteem. Particular strategies include task sheets, group discussions, peer support, self and peer assessment, exemplars, display walls, descriptive criteria and variations of these. These findings link to Tunstall and Gipps (1996) and the use of descriptive feedback relating to the cognitive development of the student. Steve described how he is constantly providing visual feedback by drawing:

Steve: You will see a little diagram by me or it will be on a piece of paper or on a task sheet ...and they will actually talk and I will be talking specific to the drawing. I find that is really a lot easier than say talking about some compositional issue… by doing a thumbnail right in front of them so... how they might have improved that composition.

These methods seem to be an important part of the daily interactions with students to develop understandings of art techniques, processes and their ability to discuss work in progress and to develop an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. Harlen (1998:3) states that:

> Action that is most likely to raise standards will follow when pupils take part in deciding next steps rather than being passive recipients of teachers' judgements

> of their work... for the teacher there are two parts to using information; sharing goals and expectations with pupils and helping them to develop the skills and learning strategies which enable them to make progress.

Anthony also explained how he gave feedback to a student through a self-assessment process. The student was making an artist's study of an Edward Hopper painting and in a self assessment event, commented on doing sections of colour well.

Anthony: They are doing markmaking, layering and drawing well that they weren't aware of. They think they are doing sections of each colour well and I have ticked it ...and then I am saying using colour more would be a way of improving the work i.e. not one colour in one area you know but then liberally in each area.

At Central school students were encouraged to talk to each other about their work, to peer critique and develop their critical skills. Their teachers also gave feedback on the sheets to their students and used visual exemplars and diagrams to support their comments. Some of the descriptive criteria required work to show: relationship to artists models; applying principles of composition; using different formats; recording edges of shapes; understanding and applying an idea; and investigating ideas thoroughly. These methods seem to fit within a formalist view of art education. This involves a structured programme developed by the teacher based around formal elements such as colour, line and tone and principles of art such as composition and balance.

The teachers felt that these methods enabled students to acquire knowledge and to understand and use terminology about art practice. They also helped to develop a critical awareness about the strengths and weaknesses of their own practice. The HOD at Central school commented "the girls really like it as they can see where they are going." Louise also described how powerful peer discussion was, when a student who she had tried to help with a drawing technique seemed unresponsive to her advice but had responded positively, when another student explained the technique to improve the drawing.

'They can identify their strengths and weaknesses".

A key purpose of descriptive feedback in formative assessment is to explain what students are doing well and what it is they need to do to improve upon in their work. When teachers describe and identify students' strengths and weaknesses and next steps needed to improve performance, this is often referred to as feeding forward. Gipps (1994: 124) describes how it is important for students to be involved in this process:

> Assessment to find out what and how children know is thus part of good teaching practice and in helping the teacher to decide what and how to teach next is formative assessment. However if it is to be really fruitful it seems the pupil must be involved, since teachers need to explain to pupils what they need to do to improve.

The teachers in the study recognised the need to create situations for students to develop their abilities to analyse their own performances and identify their strengths and weaknesses.

Louise: Students are able to identify how and where they need to improve themselves. They can identify their strengths and weaknesses. Students say "you don't really realise you are learning, gosh we've improved" when they compare their work part way during the year, with the beginning.

Gipps (1994) claims that such feedback, which defines how successfully something is being or has been done, is a key feature in formative assessment. She refers to Kulhavy's (1977) research, which confirms the correction function of feedback, which tells the students how well content is being understood, and it identifies and corrects errors - or allows learners to correct them. This correction function is seen as the most important aspect of feedback. Steve from Hill High School described his strategies to help students analyse their own and others artworks through discussion sessions that help them identify what they need to do next.

Steve: We put all the drawings out and I facilitate discussion hopefully which is generated by the students so that they talk about.... I asked them questions about what they are doing... which drawing do you like? ... and then we try and talk about why and what is successful and what isn't successful and how they can improve their drawings. That I have found to be really, really positive.

Anthony at Main School described this process as reflective for the students and through this they are helped to identify what to do next.

Anthony: I think they are getting constant feedback each time. Each time this happens, one, they are getting the opportunity to do it themselves and two, they are getting an opportunity to well... to assess themselves, they are reflecting, aren't they?

Anthony describes how it "is incredibly useful, so simple in terms of clarifying the task and giving the student direction." He acknowledges the different paces that students work at and that "they all don't have to do exactly the same next step stuff at the same time". He feels that most kids "are actually oriented towards direction"but encouraging them to sort out the direction for themselves slowly helps them become more independent. Anthony used a feedback form with his students, which had two simple sections. The intention was to have both teacher and student complete the two sections. The first section was headed *you are doing these things well in this work* and the second section described *do these things to improve your work*. An example of this form had brief comments by the teacher that they were was drawing and sketching well but needed to work on colour mixing to improve their work. Anthony also used a drawing process instruction sheet that contained steps involved in building an accurate drawing. These worksheets and other methods described by the teachers indicate a perception that students need to have an input into the process of discussion and dialogue to build their understanding of the art process and how to improve. It seems that when students engage in this way they are more committed to their own learning. This commitment links to concepts about confidence and self-esteem resulting from art making.

"I was always encouraging so they actually feel a lot more comfortable"

The teachers all commented about perceived improvement in students' general self-esteem and confidence, which fits within a progressive view that art education has psychological benefits. Steve felt that the benefits of formative assessment lead to increased self-confidence and were a stepping-stone to achieving well further on at school.

Steve: Cos I think that it is really important cause otherwise you end up with quite a disparate sort of system so that when students go into the following year group you actually realise there are disparate sorts of problems there. I noticed that with last year, I mean with the previous teachers' class, last year, obviously had a bit of a struggle cause they had someone else come in and change half way through the year, so that a lot of those students in the sixth form now actually have a low self esteem with their work and no confidence and they find it really awkward to talk about their work. Whereas my guys from last year I was always encouraging so they actually feel a lot more comfortable about it so that has been quite interesting sort of little thing to see how they actually progress in that line.

He also described the process of discussing work with students to develop their confidence and independence.

Steve: The students...actually there is a direct benefit in the sense that when they go back to their own work, you can hear them talking about it and so they are all discussing the artwork and that is nothing to do with me and that's really good.

This statement appears to indicate the idea that art practice itself is responsible for increased self-esteem through some sort of transference process rather than being established through the actions and language of people. Anthony, acknowledged how a student was making progress through this process.

Anthony: I have ticked her a wee bit higher than she has ticked herself which is interesting in hindsight because this same student, what's on the wall there, her work is a lot better than what she put up on the wall last term, for herself it is better, its still not super great but for herself it is actually quite a lot better.

These comments suggest that self-confidence is perceived as an important attribute for art students. This may because of the uncertainty surrounding definitions of art and the difficulties of developing a sound personal knowledge base. Jackson (2000: 7) describes how students learn through practice itself to construct a personal knowledge base. Although individually formulated this shares common conceptions with others in the design community. Jackson further states that the learning process in art has evolved as a set of practices based on assumptions and shared values. These values, practices and assumptions form the base of the guild knowledge for art education.

However this raises the issue of knowledge in art and the competing discourses that exist about the nature of art and art education. Atkinson (1998) acknowledges that art teachers have the difficult task of responding to the personal power of pupils drawing practices while initiating pupils into the socially constructed traditions of curriculum practices and techniques. He describes a power-knowledge discourse where particular discourses are seen as more important than others in art education. In the classroom it is common practice to privilege the judgements and opinions of teachers and practitioners.

"I will speak to it"

There is a danger, however in formative feedback to students if teachers drive their own views and deny students opportunities to become involved. Blaikie and Ross cited in Boughton (1996) found during reflective discussions with students that teachers do not always listen carefully to students and can dominate through teacher talk. Anthony sometimes seemed to give more feedback from the position of teacher and his students did not always have opportunities to join in.

Anthony: I wanted to give each some formal feedback so I wrote on a scrap of paper and said... yeah you are doing these things well, do these things to improve, and it was Stevie - very good drawing, Angie improved... lots of areas of weakness...if you do you will become well skilled. So this would be the advice.

He did, however, believe that students were slowly becoming more aware of their strengths and weaknesses through this feedback method. Anthony also described his method of using a display wall where students are encouraged to put up their research drawings and paintings in progress, transpositions of their artists models' work and an enlargement for their folio. Anthony often mentions how he controls the timing of the feedback event and how it is structured.

Anthony: This way I can actually speak to the process. Like I said, it has to be that and then I will speak to it - or maybe I won't that day and maybe the next day I will speak to it.

Anthony also stated how he would ask his students to analyse their artwork and self assess but he would check this from a position of teacher.

Anthony: I would get them to self assess then I would check it and correct it and give it back to them.

At Central school the teachers used descriptive assessment criteria to give feedback to students about achievement levels. The teachers as professional "experts" developed these criteria and students were not involved. Further development and refinement of teaching content was linked to each other's performance rather than from formative interactions between teachers and students. There was recognition and valuing of the experience of the most senior teacher.

Janet: I try and stay one class behind and when I get a bit unsure I slip behind purposely so that I can follow the leader kind of like those bike races. I always do

really well cause I have mine for the first time on a Tuesday and Carole has had hers twice.

Louise: We can go and see what each other have been doing as well.

This suggests how experience and knowledge can lead teachers to assume positions of power and dominance. Atkinson (1998) explores power-knowledge relationships between teachers and students and how this can lead to students' drawing practices being controlled and manipulated. He maintains that formalist discourses do not identify aptitude and ability in the student, as they appear to do so, but rather construct a particular approach to drawing and artmaking. Atkinson refers to Foucault, stating that art, like other knowledge, is socially constructed through language. Using particular teaching methods and curriculum approaches can implicate forms of power. He argues that identification of drawing ability is recognised and produced through a particular symbolic order and this in turn invokes a power relation between the teaching discourse and pupils drawing practice. This means that particular theories and approaches are reproduced through the teaching process.

Summative compromise

This section discusses the inevitable compromise that teachers face when they are teaching to a summative examination. Harlen (1998) has identified a key problem for teachers when using formative assessment. She suggests that formative assessment is pupil referenced and judgements are made by pupils and teachers about next steps. Assessment, however, for summative purposes requires judgements to be made by teachers against public standards or criteria. If a connection is to be made between the two, the information gathered for formative purposes has to be reconsidered and reviewed against the external criteria, in order to arrive at a summative judgement. All the teachers made some connections with the final summative event. Steve described how he saw the formative assessment linking to summative.

Steve: I think they are getting constant feedback each time.... it is formative isn't it. It is all part of the process that's building towards the end of year folio.

Anthony also saw a connection described as:

Anthony: ...a way for them to externalise and look back and see that things do connect from one day to the next ....the past is not completely gone, because the folio actually shows the progression of the entire year.

Louise also believed that the assessment is cumulative as the work is seen again and rejudged. Harlen (1998) describes how information for summative purposes overshadows the whole assessment process and can lead to a distortion of the aims of teaching. This indicates a tendency for summative assessment to drive curriculum content.

> One of the universally accepted facts about testing, particularly high-stakes testing is that it will have a powerful effect on the way teachers construe the nature of the task..... So an increase tends to occur in the time and effort spent in learning and teaching what the tests measure, and, because the amount of time available is fixed, decreases efforts to learn and teach skills which are not measured by the tests (Gipps, 1994:31).

Steve recognised this conflict when he described how the Year 11 course expected "students to work at such a pace that there were not enough opportunities to reflect on their work." Carole at Central school also commented that she felt "the folio is kind of restricting cause you are always dealing to space on the folio. But no other way probably." The focus is towards the final folio summative event and it seems that pressures of assessment, such as subject status, public accountability and professional credibility has made art teaching at senior secondary levels a very narrow field and this seems to be largely accepted by the teachers in the study. Anthony at Main school felt "four panels is too much." He was the only teacher to express opinions about

content and questioned whether "at age 15 are we following a systematic programme or teaching art?"

Gipps (1994) quotes Fredrikson (1984) who identified that the influence of tests on what is being taught is greatest because that information is important in holding schools accountable. It is common practice for schools to use their examination results to promote their schools in advertising to attract students and raise their public profile. It is common for schools in New Zealand to promote themselves through their successful examination results. A recent advertisement in the Press (2002:31) for a Christchurch school congratulated girls who achieved success in the Bursary and School Certificate examinations and listed the number of scholarships achieved and the pass rates for both examinations. A small rural school featured in the local Hurinui News (2002:5) also claims outstanding results in last years School Certificate and provides numbers and statistics about student pass rates and means.

Some of the teachers interviewed, explained how they converted their formative assessment information into percentage marks for summative purposes. At Central school the marks were worked out from the five levels of the criteria. Carole stated that the students also like to see a translation of the grades to marks. Unlike Central school, the teachers at Hill High School did not translate grades into marks but preferred descriptive statements on reports. This may reflect different understandings of standards assessment and also strategies for dealing with year eleven while it was still a ranked system. This suggests how assessment for formative and summative purposes can become confused. Anthony described how he felt the need to produce marks.

Anthony: So this would be the advice and then there is a mark so he can see where he is. Well unfortunately, I was trying to see this in terms of marks, I was trying to keep it tied to the reports because on the reports each of those things, I actually enter a number, so it come out like that.

Despite their detailed criteria systems, some of the teachers interviewed were still falling back on summative marks and ultimately ranking their students. This seem to reflect a sense that despite the extensive development of written criteria and new systems based on understandings of formative assessing, these teachers were still compromising and feeling constrained by summative assessment requirements.

Summary

On the surface, this discussion about formative assessment indicates a genuine desire by teachers to encourage learning in art that is meaningful. Formative assessment appeared to be an important aspect of classroom interactions for the art teachers in this study. Teachers also talked about the importance of creating safe, supportive, encouraging environments for students to foster the growth of confidence, independent critical skills and self-esteem. They described how students liked being able to see where they are going and how formative methods had the flexibility to cope with individual needs and could allow for students to work at different paces.

Teachers seemed much more comfortable with formative feedback. This may be because they perceived some control over determining content, approaches and subject matter in contrast to the pressures they felt in a summative context. Formative methods are more interactive and empowering as they provide students more opportunity to discuss their own work. These beliefs may be located within what Boughton (1996:5) describes as:

> ...a concept of authentic assessment which requires students to engage in long term tasks or projects that are challenging, complex, meaningful and reflect real life situations. Data for analysis includes portfolio evidence of developmental work, written or recorded (student reflections) and student teacher dialogue.

There were no comments that indicated any anxiety or stress with formative interactions with students. This is in contrast to the comments made by the same teachers about the anxiety involved with summative assessments. Louise from Central school said:

Louise: Like when we are using ABA {Achievement Based Assessment} it is not too difficult but when we come to ranking them and getting that separation, that is when we find it quite difficult.

This comment indicates the inherent contradictions between formative and summative methods, the dominance of summative assessment and the effect on deep learning. Biggs cited in Jackson (2000:4) describes "deep learning as talking and discussing ideas and as a powerful way of reflecting and testing learning as it provides a means of negotiating and structuring meaning" which many of the teachers seemed to be talking about. This is in contrast to grand summative assessments at the end of a year with the work being taken away by teachers to be marked. Jackson (2000: 9) suggests that behind this practice are assumptions that only teachers are adequately informed, experienced and reliable to make these important judgements and he describes a hero culture which privileges the judgements and opinions of individual teachers. Aspects of this are seen in Anthony's comments when he assumes authority and "speaks to the work" on the display wall. The teachers at Central school also take responsibility as experts to develop the assessment criteria and assess all student work.

Another difficulty in formative assessment is described by Blaikie and Ross cited in Boughton (1996:6) who found:

> During reflective discussions with students that teachers tend not to listen carefully to students: that they seem to drive their own agenda's through teacher talk; that students understand more about their own feeling states and sensibilities than adults comprehend; and that dialogue, properly conducted, can reveal valuable insights into the process of art making.

This is seen in Anthony's comments about his "correcting student work" and his speaking to student work. Steve at Hill high School, seems to appreciate the importance of student input when he hopes that students will generate questions and discussion about their work. He stresses how he has found this process to be really

beneficial. He actually says "when students go back to their work, ...you can hear them talking about it and so they are all discussing the artwork and that is nothing to do with me and that's really good". These beliefs are supported by Ross in Boughton (1996:3) who states that the most overlooked element of student assessment in the arts is student self reflection and the strategies described indicate teachers willingness to facilitate this in different ways. Steve seemed to be aware of this need as he expressed concern about the nature of the School Certificate art examination process that required kids to work at such a pace.

Steve: that they've just enough time to catch their breath and that's why I am not so keen on the fact that we're not reflecting enough on the work.

There are also questions about whose knowledge is being unpacked in art contexts. This is seen in Anthony "talking to it" and also in how he would get students to self assess and then he would check it and correct it. Atkinson (1998) discusses a normalising discourse by teachers through which students learn to believe if they have ability or not. The assessment documents, which Anthony used with his students, emphasised correctness through colour mixing, researching ideas and accurate observational drawing.

Some teachers identified links between formative assessment and the final folio assessment and could see the tensions that existed between the two methods. This raises questions about the role of formative assessment and how teachers are using it. While their methods designed to encourage deep and meaningful learning through reflective practice and dialogue they are compromised by summative requirements. This pressure can lead to build narrow understandings of practice dominated by the summative, end of year folio requirements. Harlen (1998) describes how information for summative has "overshadowed the whole process and the focus of judgements about all work has become the need to decide its level. In consequence the formative use of information is neglected". The pressures associated with summative assessment are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Summative assessment pressures in art education

"It is so difficult to actually put that mark on an artwork"

Introduction

In this chapter I focus on teachers' comments about their sense of professional responsibility and concern when making summative judgements about student artwork. This is in sharp contrast to their descriptions about being more comfortable with formative feedback discussed in the previous chapter. Boughton (1996:1) defines summative testing as a method that assesses learning at an end point such as end of term, year or course unit. Summative assessment often involves national exams aimed at sorting students by ranking them using norm referencing processes and scaling systems. Summative assessments are high stakes for teachers and students. Successful results enable students to enter tertiary courses and access particular careers.

Summative assessment for art teachers is particularly complicated because of the lack of clear definition within art and the added pressures of high stakes assessment. For the art teachers in this study, lack of agreed definitions about art, art education content, and approaches, means that they are continually interpreting curricula guidelines, examination prescriptions and assessment criteria to develop appropriate programmes for their students.

Brown (2001) identifies system accountability as a key concept held by teachers in his study. He describes how teachers have to be able to demonstrate that they are delivering a quality assessment product that society is entitled to by virtue of funding the educational process. Accountability has consequences based on student assessment or achievement results that tend to be high stakes. In a high stakes environment teachers' fate can be tied to students. Consequences can range from teachers being given extra pay for increased results, and schools or teachers being vilified in the media for having poor student assessment results.

The professional concerns these teachers held about summative assessment include: the need to develop assessment experience, to be confident awarding marks and grades and not marking too easily, knowing what is acceptable practice in programme design, and being accountable. These areas relate to a sense of professionalism and that to be seen to be "getting it wrong", could show up their inexperience, and call into question their professionalism as art teachers. The professional status of art teachers and credibility of art as a subject seemed to be important to the teachers interviewed. There has been a substantial growth of numbers of students taking art in secondary schools in New Zealand and this has resulted in an increased status and recognition for art education as a subject. Large numbers now take art at senior secondary school level and examination and scholarship results have equal academic recognition with other subjects, for entry to universities and polytechnics. This position is different to other countries such as Canada and some states in the USA where art and assessment results have not been included in tertiary entry stakes.

Assessment for the year 11 School Certificate art examination requires students' work to be assessed by presentation of a four-panel folio and a fifty-page workbook. A student's submission is internally assessed by the teacher providing a percentage mark made up from a mark out of 40 for the workbook and a mark out of 60 for the portfolio. A sample set of portfolios and workbooks are moderated externally by groups of teachers working as national moderators. The moderators use a system of benchmarks using portfolios from previous years to establish national standards and moderate the school samples against. Through this process, rank orders and percentage marks are established in line with National standards.

Teachers also referred to the influence of the new Level 1 achievement standards, which replaced School Certificate Art in 2002. The achievement standards form part of the new (NCEA) National Certificate in Educational Achievement qualification system for senior secondary school. This system is no longer ranked and norm referenced. Students are assessed against criteria and are awarded grades of not achieved, achieved, merit and excellence. This method is intended for summative assessment with students required to present a three panel portfolio that will be

moderated in the same way as the current system. This system still requires teachers to interpret the intention of the standard and the assessment criteria to develop appropriate programmes.

As stated previously, summative assessment for art teachers is complicated. The following sections discuss how teachers deal with assessment issues through building experience in the system, working collaboratively to affirm their practice, developing strategies for judging and marking student work and dealing with accountability pressures.

Building assessment experience

"Being inexperienced.... I'm very nervous about that"

Developing assessment experience seemed to be very important to new teachers. The two newest teachers, Steve and Henry from Hill School talked about their feelings related to their inexperience. They were concerned about their ability to give grades and Steve said when referring to reasons for not giving grades:

Steve: Because we find, especially being inexperienced that I'm very nervous about that.

Other insecurities became apparent on closer inspection of the data. When Steve and Henry talked about feeling insecure because of their lack of experience, they commented how the teacher, who they replaced during a transition period when they all worked together, had reinforced this.

Steve: This teacher said - he was really insistent upon it, that we didn't enter into that {giving grades} because he said it sets students up for a fall.

This had reinforced their uncertainty about giving grades to students and that these were very likely to be changed during later moderation processes and students would feel let down by their teacher being inaccurate. Teachers who were more experienced also expressed concerns about giving grades and maintaining standards.

Carole: You know, you go on thinking, now, what can we pull them down on, as opposed to what can we give them.

Steve and Henry both felt fine about ranking students and comparing folio work but both said they "would find it difficult to put a mark on them." It seemed they felt that they needed more experience of being part of an art community of educators to know what marks to award rather than being able to do this with their own content knowledge and skills as teachers. Other teachers in the study described this sense of peer approval and judgement. They mentioned the wider professional body of art teachers and they talked about listening to the opinions of their professional colleagues and having feedback from their colleagues and peers when assessing student work. Both Steve and Henry, the teachers who were less experienced, commented during a marking session about a piece of student work on a folio which involved drawing over a photocopy to visualise a sculpture idea. They were worried that this would be seen as "acceptable practice". This term may refer to a sense of being scrutinised and checked by peers, local art teachers at marking meetings, and examiners. The more experienced teachers also commented on this.

Carole: After we had that meeting.... there was such a range of opinion on that folio that we ended up coming back and being very sort of confused, concerned.

A peer review of the findings also supported the analysis of Steve's language reflecting a lack of professional confidence. This was apparent when he was trying to convince the interviewer and himself about the importance of students generating discussion amongst them but he did not sound convinced. His sentences were often unfinished and he also stopped in mid sentence or in the middle of thoughts.

Steve: The students - actually there is a direct benefit. We do have a grade system - and we make that - when they like, for the exam, we gave them some grades.

However this may also indicate a difficulty in finding the right words, struggling to articulate ideas, to explain his approaches clearly or may simply have been nervousness at being interviewed.

This sense of finding security and agreement about acceptable practice through colleague opinion relates to becoming part of a community of teachers. The following section describes how this process occurred.

Working Collaboratively

"I feel we are all on exactly the same wavelength"

Teachers wanted to agree with each other within departments and also in the wider community of art teachers. Janet expressed concerns and feelings of unhappiness when this situation was not present.

Janet: I often saw work differently to how the other teacher saw it and that was difficult. We were all doing the same things but just different approaches, different standards. I was never happy. I found that quite stressful.

In her current situation at Central school she said:

Janet: Here I feel we are all like exactly on the same wavelength - in agreement with our interpretations of what is good.

At Central school all the teachers planned and assessed together to keep in touch with each other's classes and to monitor progress. They described that this was important to "touch base, keep in touch", and they felt that knowing what was happening in each other's classes helped to "maintain consistency of delivery". Steve and Henry also had a common approach and had regular meetings to oversee and discuss the progress of their students. This may be a way that teachers begin to establish common understandings and develop a sense of common or agreed practice. Anthony did not work so closely with his colleague although he described a need to present a commonalty to students.

Anthony: Her system is totally different. I think she does use that but again how and when and where is totally different. So that's fine, that's her prerogative but the kids they do feel that it is transparent and its the same and we find it is important for them to feel that way. Then they don't think that something different is happening over there than happens over here and has nothing to do with choosing a particular teacher.

Teachers also share information, student work and photographs through informal meetings and at national conferences and local courses. The teachers at Central School used a system of photographs for their own benchmarks to help them to validate their assessment judgements. Although an official benchmark book was produced annually they felt the need to develop their own material to build up a collection over several years. Teachers seem to learn from these successful examples of students' work through a visual approach, rather than through reference to the prescription.

A Canterbury Art Teachers' Association report (1985), *Recommendations for Revision of School Certificate art*, suggested that teachers had developed a common approach to teaching the subject without much reference to the prescription. This seemed to have been achieved by teachers placing a strong reliance on both examiners' reports and sets of slides to develop a common School Certificate format approach. Orme (1988) describes how considerable understanding and agreement can be achieved among evaluators in the degree of interaction organised by the examining body, which can create a common aesthetic viewpoint. This may be seen as dominant discourses being established by a particular group, in this case the teacher examiners. Hughes and Lauder (1990: 162) cite Nash's discussion about how people in education make decisions. He talks about how individuals follow the "tacit collective wisdom of the group". In the case of art it seems teachers develop a collective agreement through peer dialogue, visual examples of national standards benchmarks and photographs in examination booklets alongside examiners comments.

As examination prescriptions are expressed in very general terms teachers can have difficulty in achieving a reliable assessment of work for examination purposes. Teachers used these reports and visual exemplars to develop an understanding of assessment standards. Despite this, teachers found it very difficult to award final marks to students.

Marking Strategies

"I know I've got to be harsh"

As stated previously teachers are required to give percentage mark to their students. These marks and a small sample (four to five portfolios and workbooks) are nationally moderated. This system involves a national panel of art teachers working as examiners to establish national standards using previous years samples. The intention is to establish consistent national standards. Teachers receive their moderated marks back and then adjust the marks of the rest of their candidates.

When teachers talked about awarding summative marks and grades for moderation they all mentioned a need to be tough when they marked. Anthony at Main School was very clear about how he determined summative marks.

Anthony: It is professionally based on how I feel they would be based in the cohort nationally - and then I whack off 10% mentally before I even apply the numbers, because I know I've got to be harsh.

This teacher continued explaining how he makes this process transparent to the students and he tells them he marks harshly. He explained how he prepares them to receive their final marks.

Anthony: They will feel good about it because they know its true and they haven't got unrealistic expectations.

This seemed to be a response to feeling professionally vulnerable. Teachers were anxious about awarding marks which could be changed during the moderation

process and as result tended to mark conservatively. The teachers at Carole's school agreed that they were inclined to be tough in their marking. Carole described how they usually had a 4-5-mark shift upwards.

Carole: I think we were quite hard last year and we need to be careful this year we are not too hard. But then you do get nervous - you think now am I being over generous here.

Another way teachers showed their uncertainty was that they did not award full marks.

Janet: We've never given them full marks, not since I have been here... we nearly did recently.

The less experienced teachers Steve and Henry also had strategies to protect themselves by not indicating to students' their final marks. During the year when giving marks or grades Steve said:

Steve: We tell them that just because you get an A for this bunch of work here doesn't mean you are gonna get an A.

He seemed to be referring to a method of giving some summative marks but making sure that these would not be a reflection of the mark they would receive at the end of the year. There was a sense that marks and grades during the year could give students the wrong impression about their level of achievement.

Steve: When we give them a grade we said to them - this is no indication of the grade you will receive at the end of the year.

The more experienced teachers at Central School only awarded grades during the year and made a translation to marks at the end of the year from these. The mid year assessment included five levels of achievement in each of the five assessed elements.

These elements were: artist model research; media and techniques; composition and placement; generation of ideas investigated in workbook; and observational drawing. The workbook assessment criteria were also achievement based over five levels with three elements assessed relating to composition, contour edge, shape and tonal value. Steve had in inherited a set of seven assessment grades from A to E that were linked to descriptive criteria. Anthony provided a drawing instruction sheet, mid year report form feedback sheet and a painting assessment. The mid year report indicated achievement on a sliding scale from low to high with the assessment broken into five mark categories.

The teachers at Central school employed flexibility in awarding grade fives, as ultimately they needed to establish a range of marks and a rank order. They were reluctant to award level fives across all aspects of performance at year 11 despite students' achievements as they were aware that ultimately the work was to be externally moderated for the National Exam. At year 12 however, which is internally assessed they felt more comfortable and gave quite a lot of full marks.

Louise: OK with sixth form because they are meeting the criteria.

Steve also varied the way he applied his assessment criteria between year 11 and 12.

Steve: To get this is not like some of the sixth form when I say yeah, when I say there is a criteria to meet, you must achieve it.

This difference seems to relate to the external moderation pressure faced by teachers. Brown (2001) describes evaluation done by outside observers giving a value judgement about the worth of the teachers' school work as the essence of the accountability conception. This also provided a way of not committing to specific marks during the year. It appears that teachers did feel very vulnerable in this marking process. They did not want to appear to their students that they could get the marks wrong. This may reflect a strong sense of professional pride and accountability by these teachers. It also reflects the uncertainty of the art education context that

teachers work in and establishing particular standards and mark levels for a diverse range of work is not easy. As Carole said, "It is so difficult to actually put that mark on an artwork."

Accountability

"I'm totally transparent about the marks"

The teachers in the study appeared to have a strong sense of professional accountability as found in Brown's (2001) study. Brown states:

> Evaluation of the worth of teachers' school work or the curriculum itself is the essence of the accountability conception.... assessment can also be used to account for a teacher's, school's or a system's use of societies resources (Brown, 2001: 2).

The teachers at Central school were careful to work together when assessing work as they felt that presented a more objective and valid approach. After working through all the classes and awarding grades they rechecked the top work and fine-tuned all the results.

Louise: we are all quite focused about making sure that we are being objective and like we give that information as well.

Anthony: I tell them I make the whole School Certificate process absolutely transparent - link between the marks. Again I'm totally transparent with them about the processes, they understand exactly how they are marked, exactly which folios go to Wellington, not which student, but how it is chosen, the whole process, who marks it, they know the whole thing.

The level one achievement standards to be introduced in 2002 also influenced teachers' sense of professional accountability. Using standards assessment means a shift away from marks and grades to descriptions of performance outcomes designed to make assessment requirements more transparent and accessible. Using standards

also means that students will no longer compete with each other in national, scaled and ranked systems, as they will be judged against described and agreed on standards of performance. These teachers were using criteria as a way to breakdown aspects of learning. The teachers at Central school used criteria to assess summatively. They were very thorough when using criteria, taking a long time to evaluate the top workbooks writing comments and circling the grades achieved. When observed assessing student workbooks, the three teachers worked together to look closely at the work, mark the criteria sheets and write comments. The criteria were constantly referred to and mixtures of grades were awarded for different aspects of performance. The teachers wanted to link their ABA criteria to the new NCEA (National Certificate of Educational Achievement) being implemented in 2002 at year eleven. Carole thought that their level four and five criteria levels would equate with excellence in the NCEA system.

Carole and her colleagues seemed to be describing using criteria in a way that made them professionally responsible.

Carole: Using criteria makes us more objective, is good for interactions with students and parents and is good for teacher accountability and is fair.

The students receive criteria sheets prior to the end of a unit and are able to use these criteria to help them understand what is required to reach particular levels of performance for summative assessments and what is required to complete sections of work. The teachers at Hill High school had not developed assessment criteria and were very anxious about summative events.

Some of this relates to a sense of professionalism and Brown argues:

> That assessment evaluates the effectiveness of teaching by checking that teacher work conforms to required guidelines or curricula and judges whether students have learned what is taught (Brown 2001:4).

These teachers were very thorough in their assessment methods. When they assessed student work they marked the folios and workbooks separately as Carole thought this worked better and provided a valid, truer picture and gave a clearer indication. The teachers were also careful to get students to number their pages so that teachers did not have to write on students' work.

There were many references by the teachers about constraints on their delivery of content and compromises for summative assessment purposes. Brown (2001) argues that accountability and compliance results in teaching to tests, narrowing of content and drill based instruction. For example, the teachers at Central school were insisting that students stick down work on the folio boards during the year rather than wait until the end of the year.

Carole: For organisation sake we have actually said and they are going to do a whole panel of work and they can decide the format, we have given them the option.

Some of these aspects were also evident in the written assessment documents such as assessment criteria forms, report forms and written feedback obtained during the research process. These documents did include mechanical activities by students, which would fit into Brown's (2001) definition of drill-based instruction. Louise described how she directed the students to develop better management of their work output:

Louise: I got them to write down what they hadn't done and how long they felt it would take them to finish and I got them to do things, they drew up each piece and ticked it off when it was completed. They wrote down how many minutes of touching up they needed to do or finishing off and when they finished that exercise they felt really relieved.

Many of these mechanical activities were also assessed such as gluing work into books, numbering pages, following instructions, and only signing initials, correctness and accurateness. An example of feedback by Anthony to a student stated:

Anthony {to a student}: Please try to follow instructions! Only sign your initials! And these drawings were not the task.

These teachers were working to clearly defined time frames and deadlines. Anthony described that he believed the critical aspects of achieving at School Certificate, were measuring, drawing accurately, sticking with the programme and following instructions. He also said "part of the assessment is rules where I say you must". He also talked about working to deadlines and described his management of students as a "policing system". Anthony used the policing system to keep students on track. He says how he cannot use the display wall for policing, as the wall is to encourage students to put their work up and discuss it.

Anthony: I'm trying to encourage them to put stuff up and I don't want to police them for it. Then separately I will say now who needs to finish as if I haven't noticed and right - you will need to be in here at lunchtime and that sort of stuff and I'm not connecting the two.

Another indication of working tightly to teachers' instructions is seen in comments when a student produces material the teachers have not directed. At the end of year assessment event, Steve and Henry expressed surprise when work appeared that was not the result of their programme direction.

Henry: I wonder where that has come from; I haven't seen that before, has she a computer and printer at home.

The teachers at Central School were also surprised to see a piece of work on a student's folio that was different to the other students. In response to being asked how the student had come to do that the response from Louise was "she just does that herself" whereas Carole said "it is really interesting and I suspect it comes from one she's seen in Janet's class."

It seems that teachers were aware of accountability issues and had incorporated systems to make their assessment appear to be valid, objective and thorough. They worked to constraints and managed students with rules, tight deadlines and teacher requirements and there was little room for student initiative. This is also seen in a teacher feeling personally accountable for their students' achievement. Henry commented that a student had used too much black paint in a painting and he wished he had advised the student not to do this to enable the student to achieve a higher mark. He also commented that some of the drawings chosen by the students on the folios were not their best work and he felt he had let them down by not advising them otherwise.

Summary

Within the contested field of art education, it seems that teachers find it continually problematic to assess their students' work. They rely on experience, peer approval, official exemplars and various marking strategies to help them. New assessment requirements and professional managerial pressures also influence their practices and sense of professional responsibility.

An emerging question is what teachers mean when they talk about "acceptable practice". Who determines what "acceptable practice" is and how do new teachers find this out about this? The teachers in this study referred to a collective sense of agreed practice and agreed standards. Steve and Henry expressed concern about their inexperience of the common assessment discourses that they described as "acceptable practice". They seemed to feel they needed more experience of this as they were uncertain about how their practices would be seen by their peers and they were not comfortable relying on their own background and training. The teachers at Central school also felt the need to have agreed understandings amongst themselves and wanted to be in tune with the dominant assessment discourse. Janet commented how she had felt under stress and unhappy when she had been in a school where the teachers had disagreed about standards of work and approaches to content. Anthony also explained his understanding of an agreed standard when he described how he

marked his students to the national standard and then adjusted this mark by pulling it down 10% to be in line with his peers.

Atkinson (1998:27-42) argues that drawings made by children and the assessment comments of teachers create power relationships between teacher and student through which students drawing practices are controlled and manipulated and beliefs about their own abilities are confirmed or negated. Atkinson's (1998) findings are influenced by ideas of Foucault and Lacan related to power-knowledge relations. He argues that assessment practices themselves establish a pre-text, which creates a framework of recognition and a language through which pupils' drawings are understood. Atkinson (1998:39) describes how "under the gaze of this discourse, pupils are subject to specific practices and bodies of knowledge which position pupils as subjects within particular curriculum discourses." It is through such discourses that pupil identities as learners are constructed and their abilities classified. These discourses have a normalising effect on students, which hide cultural and ideological forces.

These views of Atkinson may relate to the concerns of the teachers interviewed about how art assessment relates to a wider community discourse described as "acceptable practice" and for a need to maintain standards. Is this assessment discourse driving programmes and practices in a way that is excluding the student presence from a more inclusive curriculum as Atkinson asserts? Teachers in the study were more positive about formative assessment methods and findings discussed in Chapter four. These findings may signal a desire for more inclusive practices that involve students making responses about their own work.

In a ranked examination system, however, judgements have to be made about the worth of work and its position in relation to others. Disagreement cannot occur, as decisions have to be made that some work is of more merit than other work. Teachers expressed concern about "not marking too easily." This concern does not seem to be about accuracy, as teachers were not concerned in the same way about the effects of marking too hard. There seems to be a connection to maintaining standards, which may be related to the status of the subject within the curriculum.

Being part of a national assessment structure has positioned art education alongside other curriculum subjects, and provided subject status as well as increasing numbers taking the subject at senior secondary level. In New Zealand students may gain entry to university on the basis of achievements in several art subjects.

Being part of the national examination structure has professional consequences. In this study, teachers expressed anxiety about high stakes effects of examination results on their professional credibility. A key concern related to knowing what was acceptable in their teaching programmes. Acceptable practice is dominant discourse of practice established over time through examination results, visual exemplars and recognized by the wider community of art teachers. This is seen in Orme's (1988) study when teachers discussed not knowing what was expected of them and how to be confident about their students working to national standards. Fourteen years later the President of the PPTA (Listener, 2001:27) echoes this concern about another art examination:

> That other art teachers, especially in regions such as Taranaki, find Bursary Art really problematic. Their concern is that they are never clear from year to year what's expected, so they will look at the sample portfolio's from the year before and see the best practice art, but if they base their programme on that, then they believe they are being penalised for being derivative. So they're feeling very frustrated, very bitter.

It is unclear if this is to do with maintaining the status of the subject or teachers' anxiety about not being part of the dominant discourse. Atkinson, 1998:31 argues that central to Foucault's thesis is the idea that the gaining, transmitting (teaching) or use of knowledge (particularly disciplinary knowledge's such as pedagogical or curriculum discourses which inform different teaching sites) implicate forms of power. The way teachers talk about being harsh may be related to their positions of power and credibility as teachers and a need to be seen as "being in tune with standards" by their students as well as their peers. Anthony talked about letting his students know that he marks harshly so that they do not have unrealistic expectations. Henry and Steve made similar comments. There appears to be a sense of making students aware

of the discourse surrounding assessment standards described by Steve as "not setting them up for a fall." This may link with Atkinson's(1998) arguments describing how assessment practices can function in a "normalizing way" to establish pupils identities as learners and classify their abilities.

Hill, Weate and Atkinson also argue from a Foucauldian perspective that assessment is method of control, normalising discourse, which results in divisive practices. They claim, "such dividing practices are central to the organisational process of education in our society"(Ball cited in Weate, 1999:2). It seems that as successful assessment work is held up by examiners and through reports, this becomes the standard and the collective agreement. This, in turn, drives content and approach for teachers in the classroom. As this is not an overt process then issues of power develop, dividing teachers into those that know and those that do not. A secondary principal expresses an example of such tension within the assessment of Bursary art:

> It's the loss of confidence when you have very talented students who work very hard and whose work is applauded or admired, and then they are slaughtered by the marking process (Stirling: 2001:27).

It seems that the high stakes assessment environment makes it very difficult for teachers to feel secure when assessing summatively. In extreme situations, the desire to gain good exam marks and successful records of achievement can assume dominance over the curriculum and hence become a dominant force in the ways teachers teach. The dominant examination discourse also links to other social agendas relating to classifying behaviours, commonly believed to lead to success within a competitive, and socially divided society. The classification of students according to their intelligence and behaviour and how this influences teachers' assessment judgements is described in the following chapter.

Chapter 6: Teachers' concepts of intelligence and how this influences assessment

"They are not the highest achieving group by any means"

Despite the use of formative and summative assessment systems, teachers in this study also based assessment judgements on ideas they held about their students' intelligence and ability. These ideas reflect traditional discourses about intelligence and valued social norms rather than what might have been expected from art teachers as a concept of "artistic intelligence." This chapter discusses some of the concepts teachers described about conventional ability, intelligence and behaviour and how these influence the judgement process.

It seems in my experience of education, that if you walked into any classroom and asked the teacher, who their most able student was, you would have a reply in an instant. The teachers included in their conversations, language describing their students' academic ability, as well as comments about valued social attributes. This is consistent with Ritchhart (2001) and McGee (1997) who describe how teachers quickly become experts at ranking their classes according to ability and take positions within educational discourses about the attributes and qualities, which determine intelligence. All the teachers interviewed used categories and descriptions of their students, which identified them as belonging to ability groups. Intelligence can be defined in many ways, but a useful starting point is by Ritchhart (2001: 1,2):

> An examination of traditional theories of intelligence reveals they tend towards an abilities centric perspective, emphasising the presence of overarching mental abilities (Guilford, 1982; Thurstone, 1978), general neural efficiency (Jensen, 1988; Spearman,1973), and/or specific skills for thinking and learning (Campione & Brown, 1978)... To be sure this abilities-centric focus is not universal. Several recent theories of intelligence focus on the mental mechanisms and contexts that underlie intelligent behaviour and avoid focusing exclusively on the set of skills or abilities one possesses... Nonetheless, the abilities-centric view of intelligence is quite ingrained in Western culture

and dominates much of the way intelligence is seen here--shaping the types of questions society asks about it, influencing attempts to try and measure it, and determining how teachers try to develop it in and out of the classroom.

Bracey (2001) refers to such traditional concepts of intelligence as "knowing that" and argues these are embedded in language and involve what we commonly call "cognitive logic." He cites Ryle in Duncum and Bracey (2001) to support a notion of artistic intelligence described as "knowing how" which is not dependent on language and involves knowing what steps to take in the performance of certain tasks. Bracey argues that Ryle attacked the intellectualist legend arguing that the "intelligence displayed in the performance of tasks is not necessarily the product of prior intelligent reflection but the product of intelligent action. "

This chapter, however, describes how teachers were influenced by traditional views of intelligence and held particular mindsets about students' behaviours, which influenced their assessment practices. Words used by teachers describing valued social norms included trustworthy, reliable, sophisticated, ambitious, hard working and independent. Traits described as undesirable included laziness, unreliability, not meeting deadlines, incomplete work and inconsistency. These words link to research by Tunstall and Gipps (1996) who identified how evaluative feedback by teachers contained judgements relating to explicit or implicit norms. They described this as the feedback of socialisation, which affects how children are expected to work and behave in the classroom. Tunstall and Gipps (1996) findings reflected the importance of independence and effort in relation to work that are seen in the comments of the teachers in this study. For example, independence was described as a valuable attribute, which benefited both student and teachers.

This attitudinal and characterological dimension of thinking, while not captured in traditional theories of intelligence, is well represented in the everyday vocabulary of thinking. Words such as curious, open minded, decisive, systematic are used regularly to describe intelligent individuals and describe their ability. This was seen in the conversations recorded. Assessment documents gathered from the teachers also

described desirable attitudes and behaviours rewarded in the assessment process. At Hill High School the grade categories included references to attitude, co-operation, trying hard and being on target. The reporting forms at Main school had references to attentiveness, self-discipline and hard work.

Gipps (1994:14) describes how the impact of psychometrics has a broad range of implications and long lasting legacy of assumptions about ability and achievement.

> Thus we have tests that rank student performances rather than describe their level of learning in a meaningful way; the most useful form of information is taken to be comparison between individual or groups, hence items are chosen to distinguish between students rather than because they represent the construct being assessed; and the presentation of performance in a normal curve has lead to the belief that because the group of students at the bottom are well below average they cannot learn as much as others. These are all the legacies of the psychometric model of testing which developed from the theory of intelligence.

These assumptions about student intelligence and ability, described by their teachers raises questions about: how such concepts reflect prevailing discourses and affect assessment practices? Does classifying students in this way predetermine teachers' attitudes to students and subsequently to how they are treated and how they achieve and what are different expectations between high and low ability students? The following sections discuss these questions by considering definitions of ability held by these art teachers, their expectations of able students, how they use this information to help them make judgements, and how their beliefs influence their judgements.

Findings: Definitions of ability

"They are not the highest achieving group by any means "

All the teachers in the study used language that classified individual students abilities as well as whole class ability groupings. Most of the comments in the data linked to

concepts of ability related to I.Q. rather than art ability described by Bracey (2001) as "knowing how."

When the teachers at Central school described their classes they used ranges of ability as the key descriptor. Carole described her own class as " higher than average", Janet's as being "a wider range of ability" and Louise's as "middle or average ability." The use of the word average may relate to a concept of norm referencing, which groups students according to a normal distribution curve. Carole's comments seem to indicate an acceptance that students can be ranked in this way. Steve said he felt he did not have too many of the less able students in his class which may also suggest a concept that students can be classified within such ranking systems.

A further insight was provided by Carole who said that her "higher than average" class included "girls doing sciences" which would suggest an academic concept of intelligence being located in science/mathematics. Swift and Steers, (1998) state in their manifesto for art in schools in the UK that "all pupils including the most able, should be entitled to study art throughout their period of compulsory schooling." This suggests that the authors have some idea that ability generally in education is different from ability in art and reflects some traditional norms that some subjects are more difficult than others.

Anthony provided some clues about his definition of ability when he said:

Anthony: They are not the highest achieving group by any means but they are a fairly good group of kids in that they are responsible and mature and relatively intelligent.

As well as linking responsibility, maturity as components of his definition he added that they "actually relate to language fairly well" which suggests a linguistic requirement to intelligence. Anthony felt that hard work was linked to achieving, despite ability, although he also contradicted this when he seemed to have made his mind up about a particular student and said, " that student is going to fail." There seemed to be debate and confusion as to whether ability is innate or learned. An

anecdotal comment by a teacher at an art teachers' assessment meeting suggested that innate ability is a determinant and no matter what, some students "are never going to make it." Some of the teachers did express alternate views, as the teachers at Central School said about their students "they will all get there."

Being classified as having a particular ability included expectations about behaviour, performance and achievement and these are discussed in the following section.

Classification of ability and expectations of students

"He is going to be a butcher and I think that is excellent"

This section considers the expectations that teachers have about students who have been identified as having varying abilities. These expectations range from suitability for particular careers, being self confident, and achieving well, to demonstrating behaviours such as being hardworking.

Hughes and Lauder (1990: 151) discuss how it is common societal assumption that "intelligent" people will choose or be directed into taking subjects which are deemed to be difficult or demanding while less intelligent people will take less demanding subjects. They describe a technological-meritocratic model in which:

> It is further assumed that proficiency in the "difficult" subjects reflects a more general ability to engage successfully in professional an managerial work so that restricting entry to the prestigious and highly paid jobs to those with high credentials is a rational process.

Steve reflects this discourse when he describes one of his students.

Steve: I have had one kid who has decided he is going to be a butcher and I think that is excellent. So I am glad he has decided that.

Perhaps this comment by Steve reflects an assumption that perceived lower ability equates with a manual job. Being identified as able also held certain expectations by teachers.

Anthony: There are certainly low and middle bands. I think they probably see themselves as upper middle bands, not that they have heaps of confidence in themselves, but I think that is the way they see themselves.

Anthony's comments indicate that perhaps upper middle band students should feel confident about themselves. Carole also indicated that a perception of ability should indicate a certain level of confidence.

Carole: This wee girl, who is actually of reasonable ability, was so stressed by having you give her anything other than one thing.

These comments may fit within discourses about intelligence that intelligence includes an ability to work confidently, work fast, and deal with complex and multiple tasks. Perhaps Carole is suggesting that more able students should be able to cope with a reasonable workload and deal with more than one thing at a time. Carole also talked about her expectations of certain high ability groups of students at her school that they "would spur each other along."

Expectations of able students seemed to also include effort, attitude, diligence, and consistency. At Hill High school the department assessment criteria for an A grade for excellent work included criteria for attitude and diligence, whereas an E grade reflected no motivation or effort. Anthony included assessment criteria referring to completing class work, homework, being co-operative, following instructions and being on target. Consistency was seen as an essential component of success at Central school and was used as away of discriminating amongst the highest achieving students.

Carole: At the high end – we've kind of got to look for consistency. It becomes a real focus... whereas if you had a lower group, you're probably looking for anything to lift.

Steve and Henry commented during their assessment event about a student "who didn't live up to earlier promise", which suggests a predetermined assumption that ability can perhaps equal success. Anthony described how a student who he saw as talented, was not applying himself as intelligently and diligently as he could.

However, some of the teachers felt that students could achieve beyond their perceived ability. The key factors were hard work and persistence, which could help them achieve despite being seen as less able. Steve seems to be acknowledging the need to be aware that ability is not always fixed and that students can perform well and surprise you. He described how he kept tabs on one of his lower ability students.

Steve: Like the attention deficit kid cos sometimes they bring out something really special...kids like that really like getting stuck into something, like this kid, he pulled out a lovely little piece.

Anthony also acknowledges the importance of a work ethic as well as ability in achieving.

Anthony: that's true of most kids isn't it; they stick with the programme its fine whether or not they've got the ability to do that.

This was supported by a comment from Carole when discussing the lowest ranked workbooks.

Carole: And I was looking at these and I think each one of them has got one or two pieces that with more work will be really good...I mean they will all get there.

Students as indicators to help teachers make judgements/set standards
" Yeah we look at certain indicators in the class"

In this section it is proposed that teachers' assumptions about students' abilities influence their ranking and assessing of students performance. Teachers seemed to respond to the perceived abilities of their students to set certain standards. They described these students as indicators. Some of the words used to identify students as indicators of achievement levels included "certain kids", "I look at my best student", "midrange kid" and "less able kid". Carole made an interesting comment about how her perception of her group's ability affected the design of the assessment criteria.

Carole: It is interesting too, because we probably set our ABA {achievement based assessment} criteria for our clientele, and they are quite hard...and in reality and under something like the NCEA those fours and fives would be excellent.

She seems to be saying that if a particular group is identified as able then the assessment criteria will be set at a higher and harder level. This means that for Carole assessment criteria are not predetermined outcomes, agreed on by teachers and Ministry planners, but a means of encouraging high standards. This may reflect the nature of art education programmes in schools, which are not based on agreed content. Programmes are varied and teachers interpret prescriptions in different ways. Carole has recognised that her students are near the top end of the national pool and their ability actually drives the standards to be achieved, not other way around. This can pose difficulties in the assessment system for other art teachers if the goal posts are moving and standards are not fixed or consistent.

At Central school the teachers had already developed a sense of where their students should be placed when they came to rank their work. When they put work out to assess they sorted it into four achievement groups called lower, middle, upper middle and top. Their signposting methods were based on their personal knowledge of their own students' abilities and also related to standards of levels above and below year 11. These teachers referred to ability comparisons with other years as well. They had already judged the students they were teaching as "a stronger group than our year elevens last year." Carole compared the two groups saying:

Carole: I would expect that the average mark would probably be higher. I would feel that would be right too... so then you would have to make sure, look at our marks from last year and make sure.

However, Carole described how she used the criteria but would also look ahead and anticipate an improvement in a student. She also said

Carole: But then again, you've got the criteria to say well OK, fair enough, it does fit there, but also at the end of the year that could probably make... I know it is interesting.

She also described how they would "hold back" awarding full grades to the students at the top of the rank because there was still time for students to finish and extend their work. She said, when asked, if students were not given full grades was it because the work was incomplete or because they were waiting to see what the students could extend into.

Carole: Probably a bit of both yeah, and probably more holding back. I mean the criteria are there quite set, and part of that, there is an amount, you know the quality of work that shows extension into you know all the working has to be in quantity and quality.

This suggests that despite the criteria Carole is still making judgements linked to students' performances and waiting to see what the top ranked student achieves to set the standard. This suggests that the criteria are not objective and fixed but fluctuate according to perceived ideas about student ability and determined by student performance.

At Hill High school Steve described how he interacted with his colleague Henry to evaluate student progress.

Steve: Yeah, we look at certain indicators in the class and then we'll be looking at certain students... like Judith for example. I always talk to Henry about where Judith is at, cause she is probably my best student this year.

Richhart (2001:9) describes how:

> The mental models educators hold about intelligence affect how they see and respond to the world, shaping what gets measured, cultivated and rewarded. When intelligence and being smart are viewed primarily as a matter of ability, the natural consequence is to seek to cultivate the knowledge and skills seen to comprise that ability.

Anthony also seemed to have a student labelled from a low ability group when he said, "that student is going to fail." These assumptions and expectations of able students also have a classifying effect. This can lead to teachers being biased or blind to the actual work of students' when they assess their work.

Trying not to be prejudiced

Teachers commented about how their assumptions about students can prejudice their judgements and how they also work to avoid this. The descriptors used in assessment criteria by the teachers at Central school identified abilities including "complex analysis, understanding, control and inventiveness, thoroughness, successful resolution, accuracy in observing and recording information". In this way they tried to set descriptive standards to assess students against, rather than be influenced by preconceived ideas. As Louise said, "we are all quite focused about being objective."

Janet also described how she could be biased.

Janet: Like a student that, I kind of like because of her attitude or because she is lazy or something, that will actually prejudice my marks.

The other teachers described how they would try and work to objective criteria. Louise described how this process worked by saying:

Louise: Like sickness, and how hard they are working and what they are putting into it, so there is that degree of that. You've got the criteria there. Ultimately you've got to say, well OK, still how does this fit with the criteria.

It seemed that there were also students that were identified by teachers who wanted them to do well. Janet discussed a marking session as follow:

Janet: That was pushed up, that went higher than expected, and then the reverse of that. I might have a favourite student or not a favourite one, but one that I just really like and I actually have a wee think you know your work is not as good as I wanted it to be.

Anthony described how he hoped particular students would achieve well.

Anthony: The one you pointed out, that would be top of the lot and I would like to see that be not average, but I would like to see that have a group around it, not just be top of the lot... but this is the best group I have had for a while. Because they relate to language quite well.

It seems that Anthony is being influenced by his perception of the ability of these students in a way that may affect his assessment of their work.

Summary

The language and actions of teachers in this study reflect commonly held views and traditional dominant discourses about their students' abilities and intelligence. These discourses include classifying students against statistical and traditional norms, holding views that intelligence is linked to academic performance and career success, the view that intelligence is innate and somehow emerges and is recognized through the teaching and assessment processes and how certain behaviours are synonymous

with intelligent students. This has implications for students which are discussed in the following sections.

Identifying & classifying

Teachers' language indicated that intelligent students were readily identifiable. The conversations indicated an acceptance that students fall within a predictable range often referred to in assessment as a bell curve. Carole and Anthony grouped students with descriptions including "above average", "below average", "high achieving" amongst others. Oakes and Wells (1997: 485) argue that:

> Measures of ability and intelligence have their root not in the tradition of scientific inquiry (as we often believe) but in the formation of this ideology of biological determinism, which guarantees the creation of a stratified society and the legitimation of that stratification process. Definitions and understandings of intelligence, like all meanings, are sensitive to the cultural contexts in which they are constructed. In culturally diverse societies, the meanings that tend to dominate are those constructed by the actors with the most power in the social structure. Because of the political, economic and social power of these actors, their worldview is rarely challenged and their culturally based definition of intelligence becomes "common sense."

Carole supported her classification of the more intelligent students saying they were doing science and mathematics as well. Anthony used a competence with language to support his classification of students as intelligent.

The classification of students' abilities is linked closely to the grades and assessments they were given. Students were used as indicators in the classroom of levels of performance based on norm referencing or bell curve. It seems that teachers also use perceptions about the students' abilities to establish assessment standards. Steve talked about using particular students as indicators to help establish standards when assessing.

Ball cited in Weate (1999) states that

> Dividing practices are central to the organizational processes of education in our society. The use of testing, examining, profiling and streaming in education, the use of entry criteria for different types of schooling... the creation of remedial and advanced groups, and the separation of the educationally subnormal or those with special educational needs, abilities are stigmatized and normalized.

Such dividing practices by categorizing students provide a basis for establishing "norms" to measure and define them. Thomson (1998) argues that norms provide the basis for manipulation and evaluation of individuals. Educational testing firstly normalizes and then measures off students against that norm. Through this process students are sorted and profiled and directed and expected to reach predetermined academic gaols and careers. This is discussed in the following paragraphs.

Intelligence and social groups

The discourse that constructs some students as "intelligent" implicates academic achievement with particular careers and social groups. Steve commented about being pleased that a low ability student was leaving school to become a butcher. This reflects the view that students who are classified as low ability are best suited to manual jobs.

Carole talked about setting assessment criteria to suit her clientele who were seen as intelligent and from a higher socio-economic group. Atkinson (1998) describes how within particular institutional contexts such as school examinations and assessments, pupils are positioned and regulated through forms of language such as assessment procedures which construct the teachers understanding of a pupil's ability and the pupil's understanding of their own ability. Atkinson (1998) refers to Foucault's argument of power-knowledge relations. Through this process students become

classified and grouped within particular bands of achievement. This grouping can become a powerful determinant in a student's perception about themselves and what they are likely to achieve in test situations. Hughes and Lauder (1990:153) cite Broadfoot who states:

> That instead of examinations and assessment playing a significant role in an essentially rational process of selection and differentiation they are in fact used to regulate social conflict and legitimize the power and advantage of some groups over others.

Behaviours linked to intelligence

Ritchhardt (2001) argues that within education the mental models that educators' hold about intelligence affects what gets measured, cultivated and rewarded. This means that the discourses, which construct these mental models, control the curriculum content, outcomes and behaviours that are valued and rewarded. Teachers in this study described behaviours they affirmed, which included work ethic, attitude and independence. Many behavioural attributes were linked to ideas about ability such as confidence. This was seen to go hand in hand with high ability and teachers expressed surprise if these qualities were not evident.

These ideas may link to social norms about personal effort leading to success and a willingness to engage in learning as part of that process. The expenditure of effort however can be negative if it threatens a student's concept of ability when trying hard does not lead to success. This can also lead to failure avoiding patterns of behaviour (Tunstall and Gipps, 1996).

These ideas seem to influence how teachers make their final judgements about students. This happens before a summative assessment event as teachers are forming judgments about students' abilities and willingness to learn which positions them as "able" "good" "best" students and likely to get marks that reflect that position. This pre judgement helps to rank students before a summative event and is often confirmed during the final awarding of marks.

The links between judging student artwork, classifying students' ability and behaviour, leads to complex inter relationships. Teachers seem to have a strong sense that ability is an innate quality that students bring with them. Coupled with this is an internalized social construct which values qualities such as learning, working hard and being a good student. Oake and Wells (1997:489) argue:

> Definitions and understandings of intelligence, like all meanings, are sensitive to the cultural contexts in which they are constructed. In culturally diverse societies, the meanings that tend to dominate are those constructed by the actors with the most power in the social structure. Because of the political, economic and social power of these actors, their world view is rarely challenged and their culturally based definition of intelligence becomes "common sense."

Atkinson (1998) argues that pupils become their abilities through normalizing criteria that seem neutral, objective and appear to identify natural capacities. It is as though the discourse identifies something innate in the student. Through this process the students' ability is classified and pupils become objectified in the eyes of their teachers as having particular levels of drawing ability. At the same time students discover what their ability is in relation to the norm. This also raises questions about teacher expectations and whether, if students are labelled and classified, are they disadvantaged in the assessment process.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

This chapter discusses the connections between the findings and explains how competing assessment and art education discourses affect art teachers' practice. The study examined how a group of six art teachers described and practiced art assessment. I also analysed the literature surrounding art theory and education and added this to the analysis provided by the teachers to support the themes that emerged from the data. My reflections on my teaching practice, as well as my decisions on selecting particular themes for writing up, influenced the research direction. These themes portray a particular picture of art assessment described by these six teachers. The findings from this study are not intended to be representative of the wider community of art teachers although it is hoped that other teachers may be inspired to engage in more conversations and to reflect on their own practices relating to assessment.

So what have these six teachers told us? The findings provided insights into what these teachers enjoyed in their teaching and what they were doing well such as formative assessment methods to encourage deep learning. The findings also revealed, however, that summative assessment dominated their practice and undermined some of the value of the formative methods. This raises questions as to why summative assessment was seen as most important and most valued for these teachers.

These teachers' comments also revealed an internalised traditional discourse about intelligence and ability that influenced their judgements. The implications of this discourse lead to teachers categorising students and prejudging student work based on these categories. This finding raises questions about how such judgements can limit and restrict student performance and is relevant to assessment practice in all subjects. The connections between these three discourses and their implications for teaching and assessing are discussed in the following sections.

Formative and summative assessment discourses

The findings indicated that conflict, tension and compromise exist when assessment is used for different purposes and especially when the dominant context is summative. Teachers were positive about daily classroom teaching and formative assessment methods. Despite the controversy and industrial action concerning new standards based methods, art teachers were adapting and using these methods as well as formative assessment philosophies in their classrooms. They described how formative assessment methods lead to an increased understanding of art practice for students through the opportunity to engage in a critical dialogue about art. This also resulted in increased self-esteem for students and more control for teachers over their content.

There were no comments that indicated any anxiety or stress in this formative interaction with students. Biggs cited in Jackson (2000:4) describes deep learning as "talking and discussing ideas as a powerful way of reflecting and testing learning as it provides a means of negotiating and structuring meaning" which many of the teachers seemed to be talking about. This is in contrast to the comments made by the same teachers about the anxiety involved with summative assessments.

Louise: Like when we are using ABA {Achievement Based Assessment} it is not too difficult but when we come to ranking them and getting that separation, that is when we find it quite difficult.

The incompatibility of formative and summative assessment methods raises questions why summative assessment has become such an established and accepted method of assessment for art education. By choosing to be part of this summative assessment discourse, art teachers have had the difficult task of establishing an agreed context for art assessment. Within the contested field of art and art education this is difficult.

In art assessment it seems teachers develop a collective agreement about standards through peer dialogue, visual examples of national standards benchmarks and photographs in examination booklets alongside examiners' comments. This process can perpetuate particular content and approaches for teachers in the classroom. As

this develops over time and is not an overt process then issues of power develop, dividing teachers into those that know and those that do not. An example of such tension has surfaced recently over the assessment of Bursary Art.

> It's the loss of confidence when you have very talented students who work very hard and whose work is applauded or admired, and then they are slaughtered by the marking process (Stirling: 2001:27).

Hughes and Lauder (1990: 162) also cite Nash's discussion about how people in education make decisions by following the "tacit collective wisdom of the group." Teachers in this study expressed anxiety about developing an understanding of acceptable art standards and practices for summative assessments. This concept of a dominant discourse was referred to as "acceptable practice." Steve and Henry were particularly insecure about knowing what acceptable practice was. They were not comfortable relying on their own background and training. Teachers often looked to their colleagues and peers for affirmation of their teaching during the assessment process. The teachers at Central school also felt the need to have agreed understandings amongst themselves. Janet commented how she had felt under stress and unhappy when she had been in a school where the teachers had disagreed about standards of work and approaches to content.

Summative assessment pressures came from inside and outside the profession. These art teachers felt anxious about meeting acceptable professional art standards in their teaching, as well as maintaining good results for their students and to meet school boards and league tables expectations.

It has been argued in chapter 2 that art curricula establish and justify the place of art in the curriculum and it now seems that the art examinations have taken on this role. Having national art examinations within a traditional academic senior system has verified and validated art as a subject. This status and position now aligns with a traditional academic position seen in the way the teachers referred to their students' intelligence. This suggests that defining art in its own terms and concepts of artistic intelligence need to be reconsidered.

Art assessment and intelligence discourses

The findings revealed how these teachers had developed mindsets about academic or traditional intelligences that influenced their assessment. Their language indicated that some students were readily identifiable as intelligent and that all students could be sorted into groups. This is often referred to in assessment as a bell curve. Carole and Anthony grouped students with descriptions including "above average", "below average", "high achieving" amongst others. This discourse contradicted the use of formative methods by promoting the view that intelligence is innate and somehow emerges and is recognized through the teaching and assessment processes.

Carole supported her classification of intelligent students saying they were doing science and mathematics as well. Anthony used ability with language to support his classification of students as intelligent. Such students were also used as indicators in the classroom of levels of performance and used by teachers to establish assessment standards.

Thomson (1998) argues that norms provide the basis for manipulation and evaluation of individuals. Educational testing firstly normalizes and then measures off students against that norm. Through this process students are sorted and profiled and directed and expected to reach predetermined academic gaols and careers. Ball cited in Weate (1999: 2) states that:

> Dividing practices are central to the organizational processes of education in our society. The use of testing, examining, profiling and streaming in education, the use of entry criteria for different types of schooling... the creation of remedial and advanced groups, and the separation of the educationally subnormal or those with special educational needs, abilities are stigmatized and normalized.

In other words, dividing and sorting students provides a basis for establishing "norms" to measure and define them. Defining students this way also serves to link ability levels with social groups and occupations. Steve commented about a low

ability student who became a butcher. He was pleased the student was leaving school to become a butcher. This reflects the view that students who are classified as low ability are best suited to manual jobs. Carole talked about setting assessment criteria to suit her clientele who were seen as intelligent and from a higher socio-economic group.

Ritchhardt (2001) argues that within education, the mental models that educators hold about intelligence, affects what gets measured, cultivated and rewarded. This raises questions about teacher expectations, and if students are labelled and classified as Ritchhardt (2001) argues, are they disadvantaged in the assessment process? Bracey (2001) supports the idea that art educators should base their judgements on artistic intelligence and not traditional discourses of intelligence. Bracey (2001:56) cites Ryle to establish "knowing how" as a way of artistic knowing which is:

> Not dependent on language and involves knowing what steps to take in the performance of certain tasks, having the ability to take those steps, being disposed to perform the tasks in hand and reflecting critically on the outcomes.

During the study I reflected considerably on my own practice as a teacher. In one assessment instance I found myself demonstrating a particular mindset about a student who had not achieved well in the past. In this situation she presented work for assessment that demanded attention because of the way she had used media and techniques and understood the artist model used. However as I had classified her as a student in the middle of the rank order my immediate reaction was to see this work as accidental or a fluke. It seemed that I was influenced by my preconceptions about the student rather than looking at the work to make my assessment judgements. This led me to question whether I was assessing the student or her work and raises questions about art assessment and whether we are assessing student or work.

It is an issue for art teachers to clarify definitions of intelligence, which are most appropriate in art assessment. It seems that teachers in this study favoured using traditional discourses of intelligence to validate their decision-making and their assessment processes.

Such control of the assessment process can be a way for art teachers to perpetuate dominant curriculum discourses to students. Atkinson (1998) states that the assessment comments of teachers create power relationships between teacher and student through which students drawing practices are controlled and manipulated and beliefs about their own abilities are confirmed or negated. His findings are influenced by ideas of Foucault and Lacan related to power-knowledge relations. Atkinson (1998:39) describes how "under the gaze of this discourse pupils are subject to specific practices and bodies of knowledge which position pupils as subjects within particular curriculum discourses." It is through such discourses that pupil identities as learners are constructed and their abilities classified. These discourses have a normalising effect on students, which hide cultural and ideological forces. These forces are linked to competition and social organization systems that classify learners and create systems of inclusion and exclusion.

These issues of power in teacher-student relationships raise questions for art teachers about designing content, managing assessment dialogue with students and promoting genuine deep learning. What content should be considered for assessment in student work, what form should that assessment take and how can meaningful formative assessment dialogues be mediated between teacher and student within a summative context?

Summative and intelligence discourses

As stated, Weate (1999) argues that assessment is a means to divide students as part of the organisational processes of society. It seems that particular art education approaches and examination criteria establish normalizing discourses, which separate and categorise individual ability.

The dominance of formalism within summative art exam discourses can be seen to perpetuate particular educational and social discourses that classify and divide students. Most of the art words used by the teachers to describe assessment outcomes emphasised formalist qualities such as technique, skills, media and markmaking and their language did not include words to do with debate, diversity, cultural awareness

or personal discoveries for students about art. It seems that in this way examinations dominated teaching and assessment discourses. As stated previously, summative requirements can also lead to narrower focus to achieve their goals.

During summative assessments the teachers described being conservative in their marking. Anthony described how he marked harshly and the teachers at central school said how "they never gave full marks." Their concern did not seem to be about accuracy, as they were not concerned about the effects of marking too hard. It seemed they did not want to be seen as marking too easily. This may be a way of establishing high standards to differentiate between students, which in turn may relate to maintaining the status of the subject against other curriculum subjects. This may also be a way in which art teachers establish credibility for art through grouping and categorising students as other subjects traditionally do.

Anthony talked to his students about his marking methods so students realise they will be sorted. Anthony told his students he marked harshly so that they would not have unrealistic expectations. Henry and Steve also made students aware of the discourse surrounding assessment standards. They felt it was important to "not set them up for a fall." This may link with Atkinson's arguments describing how assessment practices can function in a "normalising way" to establish pupils' identities as learners and classify their abilities. An implication of this is that work judged to be of lesser merit is seen as inferior and wrong. Atkinson (1998:30) states that we assume that the work with the highest marks is the best quality.

> the terms of the discourse establish powerful inclusory and exclusory forces so that the more successful drawing is viewed as being produced by the more able pupil.

As art teachers we need to be aware of such discourses that surround art educational theory and assessment. We need to ask questions about how to assess in ways that suit our subject and not always feel that our credibility and validity is to be measured by norms associated with other subjects.

The Final touch

When finishing a woodblock print, the placement of the last block ties all the earlier layers together to complete the picture. This study reached this stage when the key findings and themes connected together to make sense. This final connection, and what is significant in this study, is the compromise that art teachers have accepted to be part of a summative discourse and national examination. Summative examination discourses have been used to validate art education within a traditional educational discourse. The consequences of this position have affected what is taught, resulted in the dominance of formalism, particular curriculum approaches, and assessment methods and has also been used to validate the place of art in the curriculum. As a result there has been little time to consider other curricula positions.

The tradition of sorting, ranking and classifying students relates to intelligence discourses through accepted theories of intelligence, often manifested in the concept of the bell curve. This type of thinking about intelligence and assessment has implications for all educators. It is possible that new assessment environments may shift thinking about assessment away from ranking and sorting. However the use of ranked grades would seem to counter this.

Art teachers need to discuss what is desirable in art education and assessment. In art education this is difficult as there are many competing interests and discourses about what art is and what should be in an art curriculum. We also need to be clear about the purposes of different assessments. What are the roles of internal and external assessments and can they ever be compatible? Can we establish a concept of artistic intelligence as a base for assessment rather than relying on traditional ideas of intelligence?

As a result it is difficult to introduce more critical curricula and teaching programmes argued for by many post modern theorists. While Chalmers, Bracey, and Freedman (2001) argue for diversity, an acceptance of fuzziness, and a critical approach in art education curricula, these ideas are not evident in the teachers' conversations about their practice. Chalmers (1999: 10) argues:

> We have to help students see that across cultures the arts encode values and ideologies… even what can seem like direct and simple aesthetic enjoyment is socially grounded and dependent upon the contexts in which it is experienced.

This statement also offers a significant insight and challenge for art teachers to think about the implications and results of what we currently value and do in art education. This study reveals how summative national assessment dominates our practice and suggests that we could reconsider what is important in art education and use that as a base to proceed from, rather than only valuing and emphasising summative, national assessments. As we move into a new assessment environment there is an opportunity for more choice, to use and value different types of assessment methods, and to even assess less.

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Appendix A

Extended Abstract

Making their marks: Teachers' understandings of art assessment at year 11.

Introduction

This study is about secondary school art teachers assessing year 11 student artwork. The research focus is about how teachers are affected by, and respond to, the competing discourses surrounding assessment and art education. This paper presents a summary of key findings from the research study, submitted for a Masters thesis.

A Contested Field

The contested nature of art and art education can be explained using a metaphor of printmaking practice, which involves layering multiple blocks to create an image. Art is also multi layered with traditional and contemporary viewpoints, different ways of teaching, different philosophies about the content of programmes and debates about assessing in art education. These layers, like printmaking blocks can be organised in many ways when trying to build and form a particular picture or argument.

As Hickman cited in Duncum and Bracey (2001:8) states:

> That which educators call art in art education can be seen as a dynamic yet formless phenomenon; it has no really sound epistemological base and is therefore difficult to pin down.

There are many key theories claiming to know what art is. These range from aesthetic theories such as Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (1790) cited in Mansfield (1998) to anthropological and psychological theories. Recent theories, such as Dickie (1974) contest the assumption that art exists in artworks. Other contemporary theories including Feminism, Socially Critical approaches and discourses of economics and market forces provide another layer surrounding these theories.

New Zealand art education curriculum

The New Zealand syllabi, prescriptions and course statements historically reflect such diverse thinking about art. Curricula during the 1930s and 1940s were based on

psychological, creative and cultural approaches and were manifested in child centered teaching programmes. These ideas influenced the form of the 1975 School Certificate Art Prescription; by including the concept of "creative imagination" which linked it to earlier psychologically based theories. This prescription also reflected cultural and anthropological theories by the inclusion of a compulsory study of Maori Art.

The Fine Arts Preliminary examination of 1965 (Department of Education, 1978) and the 6th Form Certificate examination (Department of Education, 1986) reflected a more modernist/formalist approach based on the formal and expressive properties of artworks. The implementation of these examinations in the following years was also affected by Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE), a movement in the United States, which argued for the integration of content and skills from four areas; art making, art history, art criticism and aesthetics.

More recent curriculum changes reflect theories relating to anthropological, institutional and socially critical approaches to art education. The *"J1 to Form 7 Art Education Syllabus"* (Ministry of Education, 1989) includes knowing about the social contexts of art. The recent *"Arts in The New Zealand Curriculum"* (Ministry of Education, 2000) stresses visual arts that reflect the traditions and modern day expressions of cultures and societies.

Forms and purposes of assessment

Within this study, *summative assessment* refers to national exams aimed at sorting students by ranking them, usually at some end point such as end of term or year. Summative assessment has traditionally used norm referencing to rank students, and scale marks to predetermined means. *Formative assessment* refers to improving student learning through self-assessment, peer assessments and teacher feedback. *Standards based assessment* refers to new methods that use criteria to clear learning outcomes for students. Standards based assessment is not ranked or norm referenced. In New Zealand there are *unit standards* and *achievement standards*, which are part of the new NCEA (National Certificate of Educational Achievement) qualification. *Moderation* involves internally assessed samples of student work being

externally checked by panels of teachers. This system is used in School Certificate Art and level 1 NCEA.

Assessment in Art education: what is measurable?

How and what do we assess in art? The following sections consider four main issues surrounding art assessment.

1. Reliance on practical work for assessment of art

Parsons (1996) debates whether the accepted practice of relying on visual portfolio evidence is sufficient to understand and gain a complete picture of students' art learning. He argues that this:

> ...restricts those processes to working with the purely visual character of the work, and by definition, it excludes reference to the cultural world that lies outside the work (Parsons, 1996:60).

Parsons (1996:20) further argues that artwork must be "interpreted, and language provides a framework of meaning that makes culturally constructed interpretation possible." He questions whether students understand or merely follow the instructions of the teacher. Chalmers (2001:86) however, questions the idea that it is only the maker that can know art. He references this to the progressive ideas of the first three quarters of the 20th century and challenges such notions as being outdated and disproved.

2. Issues surrounding programme design for exams

The two approaches of student centered (Progressivism), and formalist/artist model (Modernist) reflect discourses that have been dominant at various times in New Zealand art education. Orme (1988) comments how change in art education philosophy is significant because evaluation of artwork is based on the values held by that particular society or culture and these are not fixed or permanent.

Orme (1988:8) states:

> If the prevailing art education ideology is changing without teachers being informed that this is happening, the possibility arises that teachers who continue to adhere to child centered art education activities may find their students seriously disadvantaged when their work is compared to those of students whose teachers are using the artist model approach.

Rush (1996) argues for a teacher-centred instruction approach claiming that when artists create images, they set and solve their own aesthetic problems and eventually students learn to do the same. Both Rush (1996) and Schonau (1996) argue that art education based on a problem solving approach can provide focused programmes, which enable teachers to evaluate studio art learning validly.

This approach represents a western formalist discourse and is seen in the assessment recommendations for School Certificate Art. These guidelines (Department of Education, 1976:9,11&17) recommend a basic course covering the recognition and practice of concepts of composition, line, tone, colour, spatial relationships, texture, pattern and form. Formalism also influenced the development of achievement standard outcomes for Level 1 (year 11). *Achievement Standard.1.3. Generate and develop ideas in making artworks* (NZQA, 2001:3) requires:

> Evidence of decision-making in the use of media and techniques in recording information and developing ideas from subject matter.
> and
> Show that ideas, techniques or conventions from artist's works have been used in own work.

Freedman (2001:37) however, questions formalist models saying that while they appear to facilitate an analysis of what is contained within a work of art, they condition the way students approach art. Students are taught to approach art as a series of objects about form and feeling isolated from meaning.

3. The degree of teacher direction and intervention

The opposing discourses of progressivism, and formalism, have polarised views on the degree to which the teacher should intervene in the development of students' artwork. The School Certificate examination encouraged students to self evaluate and too much teacher direction was described as stifling pupils' critical and creative development. Programmes for School Certificate art were later influenced by the artist's model, teacher directed approach from Sixth Form Certificate and Bursary art.

These shifting discourses create confusion amongst art teachers about the focus of examinations. Orme(1988:24) had previously raised concerns about an overly teacher directed approach in senior art examinations.

> under the competitive pressures of examination, some teachers may be assisting their students to an unethical degree

Orme (1986) cites Bruce who found that cross referencing results of course work with examination work in art, showed such differences that examiners concluded it was not the unaided work of the candidates.

4. Issues of subjectivity and objectivity

Debate about subjectivity in art assessment is common and criticism of art assessment often falls back on allegations of bias, subjectivity and the personal opinion of examiners. Heyfron (1983) maintains that attempts to be objective in art assessment for reliability and validity are risky because we lose sight of the personal and more subjective aspects of artmaking.

A. F. Chalmers (1982:17) however, questions objectivity on the grounds of perception, which is "influenced by our inner state of mind or brain which will depend on our cultural upbringing, our knowledge, expectations etc.- and will not be determined solely by the physical properties of our eyes and what is observed".

If objectivity is as elusive as A. F. Chalmers (1982) argues, then efforts to establish objective art assessment practices will always be problematic. Orme (1988) argues that the risk of injustice is greatest in art because art judgements derive from a largely subjective viewpoint. While prescriptions describe knowledge and understanding it is not entirely possible to display such qualities in a practical area. Art assessment is not derived from measuring factual information.

Method

The Participants

The teachers were all from Christchurch and comprised three female and three male teachers. The schools were similar sizes and included state, private, co-educational, single sex and semi rural school types. The teachers included
(a) Carole Louise and Janet (Central School) a large single sex city school.
(b) Steve and Henry (Hill High School) a large co-ed semi rural school
(c) Anthony (Main School), a co-educational city school.

Research Methods

The main methods used were unstructured interviews, participant observations, and document analysis of assessment schedules, feedback forms and records. Visits involved discussing, observing teachers assessing student artwork, and videos were made in two of the three schools involved. Field notes were made at the site and constructed later. A final session involved playing back the video to the teachers to stimulate conversations.

Data analysis

The data was coded using methods recommended by Taylor and Bogdan (1998) to organise the data starting with identifying topics of conversation through to developing possible typologies, constructs and codes. Ongoing literature searches lead to new insights into data analysis. Word lists were used to develop typologies. From these, new propositions emerged about teachers' professionalism, descriptions about their students' abilities, and reflections about teaching and assessing.

RESULTS

"Cos I figure they are going to get more out of it"

The statement above by Steve reflects how formative assessment was an important aspect of classroom interactions for the art teachers in this study. They described how students liked being able to see where they are going and how formative methods had the flexibility to cope with individual needs. They also discussed creating safe, supportive, encouraging environments for students to develop confidence, independent critical skills and self-esteem. Their conversations and actions reflected the use of new assessment methods including standards based assessment and grade related criteria.

Formative assessment methods included self-assessment, student checklists, verbal, written and diagrammatic teacher feedback, student teacher discussion sessions commonly called "crit sessions", and display walls. The teachers in the study recognised the need for students to develop skills to analyse their own performances and identify their strengths and weaknesses.

Louise: Students are able to identify how and where they need to improve themselves. They can identify their strengths and weaknesses. Students say "you don't really realise you are learning, gosh we've improved" when they compare their work part way during the year, with the beginning.

Gipps (1994) claims that such feedback, which defines how successfully something is being or has been done, is a key feature in formative assessment. Steve from Hill High School described his strategies to help students analyse their own and others' artworks through discussion sessions that help them identify what they need to do next.

Steve: We put all the drawings out and I facilitate discussion hopefully which is generated by the students so that they talk about.... I asked them questions about

what they are doing... which drawing do you like? What is the most? And then we try and talk about why and what is successful and what isn't successful and how they can improve their drawings. That I have found to be really, really positive.

Steve also described the process of discussing work with students to develop their confidence and independence.

Steve: ...the students.... actually there is a direct benefit in the sense that when they go back to their own work, you can hear them talking about it and so they are all discussing the artwork and that is nothing to do with me and that's really good.

These beliefs are supported by Ross in Boughton (1996:3) who states that the most overlooked element of student assessment in the arts is student self reflection. The strategies described by these teachers' indicate a willingness to facilitate this in different ways. Steve seemed to be aware of this need as he expressed concern about the nature of the School Certificate art examination process that required kids to work at such a pace "that we're not reflecting enough on the work."

There were no comments that indicated any anxiety or stress in this formative interaction with students. This is in contrast to the comments made by the same teachers about the anxiety involved with summative assessments. Louise commented on using achievement-based assessment.

Louise: Like when we are using ABA it is not too difficult, but when we come to ranking them and getting that separation, that is when we find it quite difficult.

This comment indicates the inherent contradictions between formative and summative methods, the dominance of summative assessment and the effect on deep learning. Summative assessment methods also suggests that only teachers are adequately informed, experienced and reliable to make these important

judgements. Jackson (2000) describes a hero culture that privileges the judgements and opinions of individual teachers. Aspects of this are seen in Anthony's comments when he assumes authority and "speaks to the work" on the display wall. The teachers at Central school also take responsibility as experts to develop assessment criteria and assess all student work.

Another difficulty in formative assessment described by Blaikie and Ross in Boughton (1996:6) who found:

> During reflective discussions with students that teachers tend not to listen carefully to students: that they seem to drive their own agendas through teacher talk; that students understand more about their own feeling states and sensibilities than adults comprehend; and that dialogue, properly conducted, can reveal valuable insights into the process of art making.

This is seen in Anthony's comments about his "correcting student work" and his speaking to student work. Anthony described how he controls the timing and structure of feedback.

Anthony: This way I can actually speak to the process. Like I said, it has to be that and then I will speak to it.... or maybe I won't that day and maybe the next day I will speak to it.

He also said how " I would get them to self assess then I would check it and correct it and give it back to them."

This raises questions about whose knowledge is being unpacked in art contexts as well as questions about the role of formative assessment and how teachers are using it. While their intentions are to encourage deep learning through reflective practice they are compromised by summative requirements. Harlen (1998: 10) describes how information for summative has "overshadowed the whole process and the focus of judgements about all work has become the need to decide its level. In consequence the formative use of information is neglected".

"It is so difficult to put that mark on an artwork"

The words above made by Helen indicate how the dominance of summative assessment created professional concerns for teachers. These include: the need to develop experience; not mark too easily; and to know what is acceptable practice in programme design. The inclusion of art as an examination subject has resulted in increased numbers of students entering art examinations as well as increasing the status of art education. All art examinations and qualifications have equal academic recognition with other subjects. This differs to other countries, such as Canada and parts of the USA, where art has not been assessed nationally.

Developing confidence and experience with summative assessment was important for new teachers. Steve and Henry lacked confidence despite being trained and qualified and quoted their inexperience as the reason they did not give grades. Teachers who were more experienced also expressed concerns about giving grades and maintaining standards.

Carole: ...you know, you go on thinking, now, what can we pull them down on - as opposed to what can we give them.

Teachers also wanted to agree with each other. This was important within departments and also in the wider community of art teachers. Janet expressed concerns and feelings of unhappiness when there was disagreement.

Janet: I often saw work differently to how the other teacher saw it and that was difficult. We were all doing the same things but just different approaches, different standards .... I was never happy. ...I found that quite stressful....here I feel we are all like exactly on the same wavelength....in agreement with our interpretations of what is good.

At Central school all the teachers planned and assessed together to keep in touch with each other's classes and to monitor progress. They described that this was

important to "touch base, keep in touch", and they felt that knowing what was happening in each other's classes helped to "maintain consistency of delivery."

When teachers talked about awarding summative marks and grades for moderation they all mentioned a need to be tough when they marked.

Anthony: It is professionally based, on how I feel they would be based in the cohort nationally- and then I whack off 10% mentally before I even apply the numbers because I know I've got to be harsh.

This teacher continued explaining how he makes this process transparent to the students and he tells them he marks harshly. He explained that this is linked to building trust with his students and preparing them for final marks.

Anthony: They will feel good about it because they know it's true and they haven't got unrealistic expectations.

This seemed to be about feeling professionally vulnerable and maintaining subject credibility. Teachers were anxious about awarding marks which could be changed during the moderation process and as result tended to mark conservatively. The teachers at Carole's school agreed that they were inclined to be tough in their marking.

Carole: I think we were quite hard last year and we need to be careful this year we are not too hard. But then you do get nervous - you think now am I being over generous here.

Another way teachers showed their uncertainty was that they did not award full marks.

Janet: ...we've never given them full marks, not since I have been here..... we nearly did recently.

The pressure of summative exams controls the assessment process and perpetuates dominant curriculum discourses in education. Atkinson (1998) states that the assessment comments of teachers create power relationships between teacher and student through which students drawing practices are controlled and manipulated and beliefs about their own abilities are confirmed or negated. These discourses have a normalising effect on students, which hide cultural and ideological forces. These forces are linked to social organization systems that classify learners and create systems of inclusion and exclusion.

"They're not the highest achieving group by any means"

All the teachers in the study used language, similar to Anthony's above that classified individual student ability and reflected traditional intelligence discourses. Carole described her own class as " higher than average", Janet's as "a wider range of ability" and Louise's as "middle or average ability". Steve felt he did not have many "less able" students in his class. These descriptors relate to a concept of norm referencing, which groups students according to a normal distribution curve. Thomson (1998) argues that norms provide the basis for manipulation and evaluation of individuals. Educational testing firstly normalizes and then measures off students against that norm.

Carole explained her grouping further by saying that her "higher than average" class included "girls doing sciences" which would suggest a traditional academic concept of intelligence. Anthony added to his definition of ability in the following:

Anthony: They are not the highest achieving group by any means but they are a fairly good group of kids in that they are responsible and mature and relatively intelligent. He also added that they "actually relate to language fairly well" suggesting a linguistic requirement to intelligence. Bracey (2001) argues that art educators should base their judgements on artistic intelligence and not

traditional discourses of intelligence. Bracey (2001:56) cites Ryle to establish "knowing how" as a way of artistic knowing which is:

> ...not dependent on language and involves knowing what steps to take in the performance of certain tasks, having the ability to take those steps, being disposed to perform the tasks in hand and reflecting critically on the outcomes.

Using traditional notions of intelligence can also reflect common societal assumptions that "intelligent" people will choose or be directed into taking subjects which are deemed to be difficult or demanding while less intelligent people will take less demanding subjects. Hughes and Lauder (1990: 151) describe a technological-meritocratic model:

> It is further assumed that proficiency in the "difficult" subjects reflects a more general ability to engage successfully in professional and managerial work so that restricting entry to the prestigious and highly paid jobs to those with high credentials is a rational process.

Steve reflects this discourse in a description of one of his students.

Steve: I have had one kid who has decided he is going to be a butcher and I think that is excellent. So I am glad he has decided that.

Teachers expected different ability students to represent certain standards. They described these students as indicators. Some of the words used to identify students as indicators of achievement levels included "certain kids", "I look at my best student", "midrange kid" and "less able kid".

Steve: ...yeah, we look at certain indicators in the class and then we'll be looking at certain students ....like Judith for example. I always talk to Henry about where Judith is at, cause she is probably my best student this year."

Carole commented how her perception of her groups' ability affected the design of the assessment criteria.

Carole: ...it is interesting too, because we probably set our ABA [Achievement Based assessment] criteria for our clientele, and they are quite hard...and in reality and under something like the NCEA those fours and fives would be excellent.

She seems to be saying that if a particular group is identified as able then the assessment criteria will be set at a higher and harder level. This suggests that she uses standards to increase performance rather than seeing them predetermined outcomes, agreed on by teachers and Ministry planners. Carole recognises that her students are near the top end of the national pool and their ability drives the standards to be achieved, not other way around. This can pose difficulties in the assessment system for other art teachers if standards are not fixed or consistent.

Conclusion

Layered discourses

The findings interrelated to reveal the tensions that exist when assessment is used for different purposes. While teachers were positive about daily classroom teaching and formative assessment methods students were also judged according to traditional intelligence discourses. This discourse contradicted the use of formative methods by promoting the view that intelligence is innate and somehow emerges and is recognized through the teaching and assessment processes.

The incompatibility of formative and summative assessment methods raises questions about why summative assessment has become such an established and accepted method of assessment for art education. The broader social contexts of education form part of the answer. Hill (2000), Weate (1999), and Atkinson (1998) argue from a Foucauldian perspective that assessment is a method of control. Central to Foucault's thesis (Atkinson, 1998) is the idea that the gaining, transmitting (teaching) or use of knowledge (particularly disciplinary knowledge such as

pedagogical or curriculum discourses which inform different teaching sites) implicate forms of power. Hughes and Lauder cite Broadfoot (1990:153) to further suggest that

> Instead of examinations and assessment playing a significant role in an essentially rational process of selection and differentiation they are in fact used to regulate social conflict and legitimize the power and advantage of some groups over others.

The dominance of formalism within summative art exam discourses can be seen to perpetuate such divisive processes. The art assessment words used by teachers emphasised formalist qualities such as technique, skills, media and markmaking and their language did not include words to do with debate, diversity, cultural awareness or personal discoveries for students about art. It seems that in this way examinations dominated teaching and assessment discourses.

Teachers described "marking harshly" which may contribute to establishing high standards to sort students, as well as validating the subject against other curriculum subjects. Henry and Steve also made students aware of the discourse surrounding assessment standards.

As art teachers, we need to be aware of such discourses that surround art educational theory and assessment. We need to ask questions about how to assess in ways that suit our subject and not always feel that our credibility and validity is to be measured by norms associated with other subjects. Can we establish a concept of artistic intelligence as a base for assessment rather than relying on traditional ideas of intelligence? The power involved in teacher -student relationships raise questions for art teachers about designing content and managing assessment dialogue with students to promote deep learning.

The Final touch

In printmaking the final picture emerges when all plates are printed together. The final picture in this study appeared in the form of compromise that art teachers have

accepted to be part of a summative discourse and national examination. The consequences of this position have affected what is taught, resulted in the dominance of formalism, particular curriculum approaches, and assessment methods and has also been used to validate the place of art in the curriculum. As a result there has been little time to consider other curriculum positions.

Chalmers (1999: 10) argues

> We have to help students see that across cultures the arts encode values and ideologies...even what can seem like direct and simple aesthetic enjoyment is socially grounded and dependent upon the contexts in which it is experienced.

This statement offers teachers a significant insight and challenges us to understand the contexts surrounding art education and how to improve art education and assessment practices for our students.

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Appendix B

Research Documents

20 July 2001

Dear Art Teacher

Research Title: **How do art teachers make sense of assessment methods and judgements relating to student artwork at year 11.**

The motivation for this project has been influenced by the work of Boughton (1997) who argued "that very little research has been completed in the area of art assessment". He raised a series of questions for research which have formed the basis for this study.
What is the nature of the discourse employed in setting benchmark standards?
To what extent does this discourse reflect attention to established criteria?
To what extent do teachers employ tacit knowledge? In this context tacit is defined as "understood, implied or existing, without being stated", (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1984) The term tacit may include personal positions and beliefs held by teachers as well.

During 2000 I completed a qualitative pilot study exploring how secondary art teachers were making judgements about student artwork at year 11. This qualitative research project was approved by the Research Committee of the Christchurch College of Education and was intended to inform possible methodologies, and to explore the topic to clarify directions for a Masters of Teaching and Learning thesis. I am now completing data collection for the second phase of the project. I am working under the supervision of Missy Morton and Dr Janinka Greenwood, both senior lecturers at the Christchurch College of Education towards a thesis for a Masters of Teaching and Learning at the Christchurch College of Education.

I would like to invite you to be part of a research study that I am working on relating to teachers judgements and beliefs when assessing student artwork. Please read the following information about the study and if you are willing to be involved, I would appreciate it if you could sign and return the consent form attached. If you would like to discuss aspects of the study and your involvement then please contact me at 3792000(day or 03 3129806(evening).

The research study
Participants are asked to participate in
1. A 20-30 minute interview/discussion which will be taped.
2. This will be held afterschool or in the holiday break and arranged to suit the participant.

Conditions for participants

1. Information will be confidential. Names of schools and teachers will not be included and all writing up will use pseudonyms. Only my supervisors and I will have access to this data which will be stored for at least 5 years as prescribed by the College regulations.
2. The transcribed notes and tapes will be kept secure and available to participants.
3. A summary of the final report will be provided to participant teachers
4. Participants may withdraw from the study at any time.
5. If participants withdraw from the study they may also request the withdrawal of data they have contributed.

Should you have any complaint concerning the manner in which this research project is conducted, please do not hesitate to contact the Ethical Clearance Committee.
The secretary
Ethical clearance Committee
Christchurch College of Education
PO Box 31-065
Christchurch 8030

Telephone: (03) 3437707
Fax: (03) 3437789

Email: theresa.evans@cce.ac.nz

Please complete the accompanying consent form if you agree to be part of the study and return to the address provided.

I look forward to working with you.

Thank you

Kathy Anderson (Researcher)
Phone: 3792000 ext 844

Dear participant

This form is to invite you to agree to participate in an interview for the following research project:

Research Title: **How do art teachers make sense of assessment methods and judgements relating to student artwork at year 11.**

I understand the information I provide will be:

1. Anonymous
2. Tapes, data and written material will be kept secure and not available to other parties.
3. I may withdraw from the study at any time
4. If I withdraw from the study then any data I have contributed may also be withdrawn.

Name _____

Telephone number_____

Signature_____

Date_____

Thank you for agreeing to be part of this ongoing research.

Kathy Anderson(Researcher)
St Margarets College
12 Winchester Street Christchurch

Phone 3792000
Email: kathy.anderson@stmargarets.school.nz

COLLEGE of EDUCATION
Te Whare Whai Matauraka Ki Otautahi

21 August 2001

Kathy Anderson
Harleston
RD 1
Amberley
North Canterbury

Dear Kathy

I am pleased to advise that academic and ethical approval has been given for your thesis proposal. Academic approval was given and minuted on 20 August at the Academic Standards Committee meeting. A letter advising of ethical approval is attached.

You may now proceed with your research. Remember to maintain contact with your supervisors and to keep them informed of progress and issues as they arise. Any further questions or queries please contact either Vince or myself.

Best wishes

Carol Mutch
Co-ordinator Master of Teaching and Learning Centre

cc Missy Morton
Vince Ham
Janinka Greenwood

Dovedale Avenue, Ilam, P O Box 31-065
Christchurch 8030, New Zealand
Telephone (64) (3) 348 2059, Facsimile (64) (3) 348 4311
http://www.cce.ac.nz

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GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
AUSTRALIA

FILE

9 August 2001

Kathy Anderson
Christchurch College of Education
Christchurch

Dear Kathy

Your application for ethical clearance for your project "How do art teachers make sense of assessment methods and judgements relating to student art work at year 11? What is being assessed?" has been approved by the Ethical Clearance Committee.

You are required to reapply for clearance should circumstances relevant to this current application change.

Yours sincerely

T. Evans

Theresa Evans
Secretary, Ethical Clearance Committee

c.c. Missy Morton, Academic Supervisor

Dovedale Avenue, Ilam, P O Box 31-065
Christchurch 8030, New Zealand
Telephone (64) (3) 348 2059. Facsimile (64) (3) 348 4311
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Appendix C

Typology Table

Typology Table from Tunstall and Gipps (1998)

The typology table derived from Suggett, Crooks and Sadler cited in Tunstall and Gipps (1998:391) was based around two main categories of evaluative or descriptive feedback as shown in diagram 1.

Diagram 1: Formative assessment typology - teachers words

A	B	C	D
Rewarding words Evaluative/work behaviour related	**Approving words about formative assessment**	**Descriptive words for specific attainment**	**Constructing achievement**
Negative words about student work/behaviour	**Disapproving words about formative assessment**	**Specific words describing improvement**	**Constructing way forward**

Evaluative/judgemental ---------- descriptive about competence

I coded evaluative words and phrases used by teachers into: rewarding or negative about students and approving and disapproving words about formative assessment. The descriptive word codes included: specific attainment and improvement about students work, constructing achievement and constructing the way forward for students.